



I AM NOT ASHAMED
OF THE GOSPEL

The Lutheran World Federation on Mission 1946 – 2016

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I am not ashamed of the Gospel: The Lutheran World Federation on Mission 1946 – 2016

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Looking at the history of the Lutheran World Federation (LWF), it becomes clear that one of the main objectives of forming the LWF was to coordinate the work of mission after the Second World War. Until today mission has been one of the core commitments of the LWF. Sharing the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, in both word and deed, is part of the DNA of the church. And even today we can say with Paul, “I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation of all who believe.” This power of God has been manifest in different ways, at different times and within different cultures. This verse from Romans 1:16 was one of the key revelations which triggered Martin Luther to launch the Reformation 500 years ago.

In the following pages, we have collated a collection of key statements, actions, recommendations, and notes from the governing bodies and working groups of the LWF beginning from 1946 (when preparations were under way for the formation of the LWF) until 2016. This document aims to open a small window into the past, through which we may better appreciate the great commitment that the LWF has maintained for the mission work of its member churches. It is remarkable that in all Assemblies with the exception of the most recent one in Stuttgart in 2010, the LWF has taken action on mission. In the LWF history book *From Federation to Communion: The History of the Lutheran World Federation*, “Common Initiatives in Mission” are described as “The Second Pillar” of the Communion (p. 17) and chapter 4 entitled “Faithful to the Fundamental Task: Mission in the LWF” (P. 145-177).

In 2016, the LWF Constitution Article III on Nature and Functions affirmed:

The Lutheran World Federation is a communion of churches which confess the triune God, agree in the proclamation of the Word of God and are united in pulpit and altar fellowship. The Lutheran World Federation confesses the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church and is resolved to serve Christian unity throughout the world.

The Lutheran World Federation:
further the united witness to the Gospel of Jesus Christ and strengthens the member churches in carrying out the missionary command and in their efforts towards Christian unity worldwide.

For 70 years, from 1946 to 2016, the Lutheran Communion has made a significant contribution to the understanding and operation of mission work among its member churches. There has been a great deal of activities, initiatives, consultations, and recommendations to foster the mission work of the member churches of the LWF. Mission agencies have played a key part in all these efforts, even when these agencies themselves have been undergoing transitions amid changing contexts.

One way to glimpse a comprehensive picture of this mission history is to follow the actions and recommendations of the LWF along the path of its Assembly, Council and Commission meetings. We start from the meeting of the Executive Committee of the Lutheran World Convention in Uppsala, Sweden, in 1946 to the LWF Consultation on Contemporary Mission in Global Christianity in Geneva in November 2016.

2017

The church as a whole has believed that the gospel, while arising geographically in Palestine, is to be shared by the whole church to the whole world. This was the conviction of the first Protestant missionaries who set out from Europe into the wider world. One might mention, for example, the first German Lutherans from Franken's institutions in Halle, Germany, who began work in Danish India, in Tamil-speaking Tranquebar. By the turn of the century when the International Missionary Conference of Edinburgh was held in 1910, Christianity had touched small parts of Africa, Asia and the Pacific. These vast areas posed the world's great missionary challenge and opportunities. With 74 million members worldwide today, churches of the LWF, including those in Africa and Asia, regard missionary outreach as their primary vocation, sending missionaries to their regions and even beyond, to continents which were formerly regarded as "Christian".

We wish to recognize the Lutheran "cloud of witnesses" who championed the work of mission. They include large numbers of church representatives and missionaries, consultants invited from local churches and Geneva staff who worked over seven decades to inspire, shape and motivate the LWF's contribution to the understanding and operation of mission in its member churches.

Already at the first meeting of the Lutheran World Convention in Eisenach, Germany, in 1923, it is reported in the book *The Rise of World Lutheranism* (p. 161) that two presentations on Lutheran missions were offered. One dealt with the historical development and special character of the Lutheran participation in the missionary enterprise, recognizing the danger of shaping missions in the image of European and American churches. At the same time, it asserted that Lutheranism's innate regard for local ethnic characteristics was a safeguard against combining an alien Western culture with the proclamation of the gospel. Although the First World War imposed severe trials on "orphaned" German missions (most of the Lutheran missions were obviously German), non-Germans who came to the rescue were impressed with the thoroughness of the work done and with the strong love for the church which had been endangered by the war. The second presentation picked up the theme of "war-orphaned missions", pointing out that, Scandinavian and American churches sought to continue the mission work that had been threatened with the collapse of mission efforts when the war necessitated the departure of German missionaries from Africa and Asia.

Since 1947, in addition to making decisions regarding programs, projects, personnel and budget, virtually every LWF major meeting has explored some fundamental issues related to mission: ecumenical challenges to mission, Christians witness in Islamic areas, the mission of the church and the Jews, the life and mission of the church among Chinese, evangelization in Europe and North America, the situation of church and society in Latin America, etc. Between 1977 and 1984, more than 50 conferences, consultations, planning meetings and workshops were organized by the Commission on Church Cooperation and its implementing department in Geneva. These included regional consultations on mission; workshops focusing on ministry to migrants in Europe, consultations on the Lutheran response to China, on evangelism in Lutheran minority churches in Europe, on Christian theology in the African context, on mission and evangelism in Latin America, on theological education for churches in secularized societies; and a number of regional gatherings of Lutheran church leaders. Many of these fundamental issues are still 21st century challenges.

In April 2014, Rev. Dr Martin Junge, LWF general secretary, said in an address to the partnership consultation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Finland, titled "A Communion of churches in Mission":

I believe there is an urgent need to take up this discussion (on holistic mission) and I am looking for ways through which the LWF contributes to it... This is not anymore going to be a discussion of mission agencies in the North, but a discussion among agencies and churches, which increasingly find themselves both at the sending and the receiving end, and are spread all over the world.

The LWF has contributed greatly to the ever evolving understanding of mission and accompanied churches in fulfilling their missionary mandate. It has never had its own missionaries or agencies, but the LWF has played an important role as a convenor and facilitator of mission practitioners. This has enabled members to share their experiences, thoughts, plans and resources while inspiring new thinking that has shaped common directions amid changing contexts. This document presents the various authoritative statements produced at regular intervals that have been adopted by the LWF governing bodies over seven decades, then interpreted and implemented in local contexts. They have shaped the thinking as well as the actions of the churches in their missionary endeavours. This collection provides a fair picture of the main perspectives and developments on mission within the Lutheran communion, according to the Spirit of the times.

What follows is a selection of different statements and actions of different governing bodies, particularly the respective commissions and Assemblies, as well as some results of consultations and other workshops. This is just a selection, and we present the respective actions of those bodies without editing (in boxes) with minimal introductions. This enables each one of us to discern and draw conclusions as appropriate.

Rev. Dr. Fidon R. Mwombeki
Director, Department for Mission and Development

Ms Béatrice Bengtsson
LWF Archivist

1946 Executive Committee of the Lutheran World Convention in Uppsala, Sweden, 24-26 July

Before the LWF was officially born, Lutherans had been meeting and organizing themselves to deliberate on how to carry on the mission task which had been severely affected by the Second World War. A program for the founding Assembly of the LWF at Lund was convened on the theme “The Lutheran Churches in the World Today”. Paragraph IV of the message of the 1946 Convention Executive Committee states:

We urge all the Lutheran churches according to the gift of grace which God has given to each to proclaim the Gospel vigorously, in fellowship with one another, to our world which has become so alienated from God and has been submerged by suffering, and in merciful love to undergird one another with spiritual and material aid.



This God in mission, who creates and sustains the universe and yet becomes vulnerable in and at the hands of God’s own creation, is a Triune God. Trinity describes “God in mission” as always a God for others; namely, the whole of humankind, the world, the entire creation. The Trinity is a communion in mission, empowering and accompanying the One who is sent, the beloved, to impact the world with transformation, reconciliation, and empowerment. For the ongoing mission of God, the Father and the Spirit send the Son, the Father and the Son breath in the Spirit, and the Son and the Spirit reveal the glory of the Father to the far reaches of the universe. This sending, yet accompanying and empowering, of the beloved, this reaching out for others, and thus the acceptance of vulnerability in love, is characteristic of the Trinity. It is this love that unites the Triune God.

(From *Mission in Context*, 2004)

First LWF Assembly in Lund, Sweden

1947

The Lund Report of Section II, “Performing Her Mission in a Devastated World”, starts with these words, which are still applicable today:

The mission of the Lutheran Church in the world of today is determined by two factors. One is the distinctive message of the Church in confessing the truth. The other is the special need of the world of our time. Since the teaching of Christ has universal significance, it must have practical application to the special need of the present generation.... The task of missions is the proclamation of the Gospel of our Saviour. The fundamental impulse which sends Lutherans out upon the missionary enterprise today is the saving work, the example, and the commission of Jesus Christ. Our Lord himself went about preaching salvation and seeking to save and He gave His last commission to His followers through all the ages the supreme commandment to go and teach and make disciples. The true body of his believers has always felt the impress of that great imperative... The missionary impulse has always proved to be a most vital principle in the life of the church in every nation and every individual congregation and must be a mighty dynamic in the total body of believers.

Understanding that mission is at the core of the very existence of the church, the first LWF Assembly in Lund in 1947 spoke clearly about mission. It formed a Commission on World Mission to further the coordination of mission work of the LWF member churches (p. 33 Lund Proceedings).

By adopting the LWF Constitution, the first Assembly also affirmed in Article III on the Nature and Purposes of the LWF that the priority was:

- a) to bear united witness before the world to the Gospel of Jesus Christ as the power of God for salvation;
- d) to achieve a united Lutheran approach to ecumenical Christian movements and to common responsibilities in missions and education.

Dr P'eng Fu, President of the Lutheran Church of China, delivered an address on the “Mission of the Lutheran church in Asia”, standing before them as “a living fruit of mission work in Asia. I am a certain proof that your work in Asia has not been in vain.”



Lund resolutions on mission

(Source: pages 30-31 of the Lund Assembly Proceedings)

In harmony with the report of Section 2 regarding “orphaned missions” be it *Resolved* that the Executive be authorized to promote the widest possible cooperation of Lutheran churches throughout the world in rendering assistance to mission fields whose normal support is temporarily interrupted, to the end that all Lutheran mission fields may be preserved during the present emergency period, and returned to the agencies formerly supporting them as soon as the latter are again able to assume their support and control.

Resolved that the Lutheran World Federation note and agree in principle with the following proposals agreed upon at the second meeting of the members of the International Missionary Council and the Deutsche Missionsrat held at Baarn, Holland, May 7-9, 1947, concerning the trusteeship of the German mission fields...

In harmony with the report of Section 2, regarding co-operative procedures in the formation of indigenous churches; and to the end that in each area a National Lutheran church may be developed, including all Lutheran churches in the area, so that an indigenous, self-supporting Lutheran church may carry forward in a unified way the work of the Kingdom in that area, be it

Resolved that the Lutheran World Federation request its member churches to encourage the formation as soon as practicable, of united Lutheran churches in the various mission fields.

Believing that God is willing to accept the service of all of His followers, and that He will empower and direct all who in true faith and devotion, would serve Him in the promotion of the work of His Kingdom, be it

Resolved, that the Lutheran World Federation encourage all member Lutheran churches to give earnest consideration to measures intended to develop a larger measure of activity on the part of the laymen of the church.

Believing that Christ Jesus is the answer to the sins and sorrows, disillusionments and discouragements, hopes and aspirations, of the youth of today's world, and recognizing the present strategic opportunity of the Church both to proclaim the saving Gospel of Christ to youth, and to utilize the church's youth in active Christian service, be it

Resolved, that we call upon our Lutheran churches everywhere to give continued and increasing attention to their youth programs; that we call upon our youth organizations, as serving arms of the Church in soul-winning and soul-keeping, to hold high the torch of faith, and that we encourage our youth to reach out the hand of Christian fellowship, especially to the Lutheran youth throughout the world, that unitedly they may express effectively their common faith and devote themselves to common tasks.



First meeting of the Commission on World Mission (CWM) held in Oxford.

1949



Dr Fredrik A. Schiotz, USA, chairman, Commission on World Missions; Dr Michelfelder, LWF General Secretary and Rev. Dr H. Meyer, member of the Commission from Heidelberg, Germany (India).



Other members of the Commission were: Lic. Elfers, Hermannsburg, Hannover, Germany, vice-chairman; Prf. Dr Paul Boendermaker, Holland; Dr Herman Schlyter, Sweden; Rev. Einar Amdahl, Norway.



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1952 Second LWF Assembly in Hannover, Germany

The Hannover Assembly Report of Section II: World Missions, can be read from p. 133-137 in the *Proceedings of the Second LWF Assembly*. On page 137 of this 1952 report, it states:

The Lutheran churches today find themselves in a situation which is distinctly different from that of the 16th century. All over the world, Christians – sometimes under severe persecution, have rediscovered the fact that there is one holy church, the Body of Christ, the creation of the Holy Spirit. Through missionary activity there have grown up in many parts of the world younger churches for whom it is a matter of faith that, since Christ is the only Lord, His church ought not to be divided. In this situation, the Lutheran church holds a unique and central position because Christ has always been the heart and core of its preaching. The Holy Scripture as the infallible witness of Christ has been the only basis and source of its faith. The love of God, who redeemed the world by identifying Himself, through His Son, with man, has been proclaimed in purity as the real consolation for burdened consciences and lost men. The Lutheran church is therefore called to use its confession in the service of all churches. This does mean using it as a law of faith but it does mean proclaiming it is a clear and true exposition of the Gospel truth which will invite others to confess the same Christ at their place and time and in their language.

The 1952 Assembly again laid great emphasis on missions. With the increasing work of the Commission on World Mission, a powerful decision-making body that by the 1980s comprised up to 100 members, it had become evident that a counterpart was necessary in the form of a department to be established at the Geneva headquarters. The Hannover Assembly, therefore,

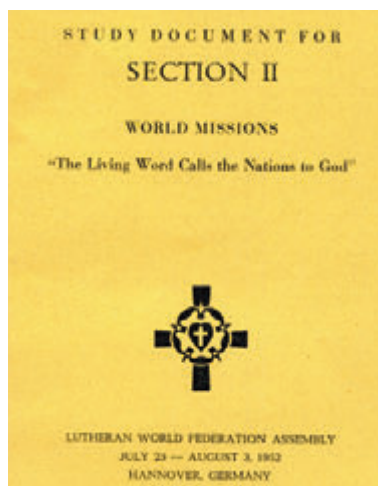
Hannover recommendations on mission

(Source: pages 24-31 of the Hannover Assembly Proceedings)

Recommended that a Lutheran World Federation Department on World Missions be established, the function of which is to carry responsibility for orphaned missions and, in cooperation with an inclusive group of representatives from younger churches, the Lutheran mission boards and societies, to continue and extend the field of cooperation among the younger churches, the mission boards and societies, and that the Executive Committee be authorized to proceed with the establishment of such a department.

The members of the Commission appointed in 1952 were:

Dr F. A. Schiotz, USA, chairman;
Bishop Dr H. Meyer, Germany, vice-chair;
Bishop Dr R. B. Manikam, India, secretary;
Rev. K. Hirai, Japan;
Rev. E. Amdahl, Norway;
Mr. C. Delbruck, France,
replaced after two years by
Rev. R. Andrianarijaona, professor
at the Theological Seminary in Madagascar.



1952

The annual meetings of the commission became the rallying point not only for the six commissioners but also for the majority of board directors from Europe and the United States of America. Pressing problems in east Africa in 1949 were the reason directors were invited to attend that first meeting. The experience proved so gratifying that a steadily increasing number of board executives, representatives of younger churches and missionaries came to the meetings. Though decisions of Commission for World Mission (CWM) were not binding on the different Lutheran mission societies, their impact had been felt and helped forge local mission strategies. The meetings of the CWM, which originally gathered around 50 experts, grew to 100 people each time, representing mission societies, boards and churches. After dividing up and meeting in working committees on the basis of geographic interest, the entire group then came together in plenary sessions.



1954

Commission meeting in Hoekelum, Holland, in October 1954 with LWF leadership in the first row (from left to right): Rev. Dr Fridjov S. Birkeli (4th from left), director of the Commission for World Mission; next is Dr F. A. Schiotz (in the middle), USA, chairman of the Commission on Mission; Rev. Carl Lund-Qvist (third from the right), LWF General Secretary, Bishop Stefano Moshi from the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania.

1956



Commission meeting at Hurdals Verk, Norway, 9-15 August 1956.

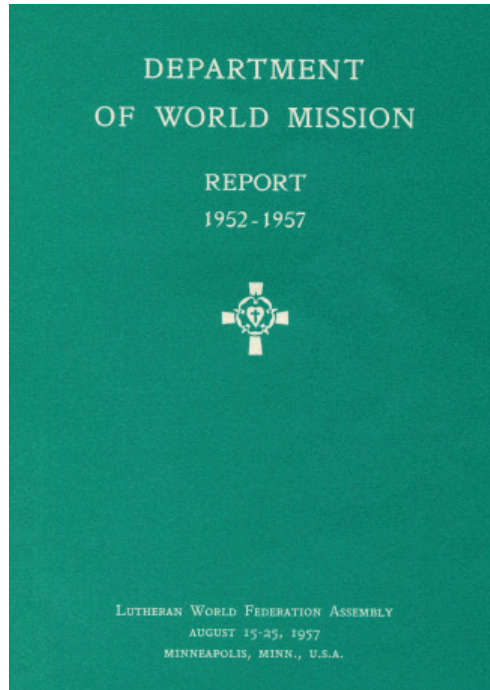
More than 100 persons came to the meeting representing their churches and missions in Africa, Asia, America and Europe, both women and men. Members of the Commission on World Mission are seated in the front row. They are from left: Rev. Einar Amdahl, director of the Norwegian Missionary Society; Rev. R. Andrianarjaona, mission teacher from Madagascar; Rev. Kiyoshi Hirai, General Secretary of the National Christian Council of Japan, Bishop Rajah B. Manikam from the Tamil Lutheran Church in India, Dr Frederick Schiotz, chairman of the Commission on World Mission, president of the ELC USA, Bishop Heinrich Meyer, vice-chairman of the Commission on World Mission, Lübeck, Germany, and Dr Fridtjov Birkeli, director of the LWF department of World Mission.

1957 Third LWF Assembly in Minneapolis, USA

The Department of World Mission presented its report to the Assembly for the years 1952-1957. One of the issues discussed at length at the 1957 commission meeting was presented by three speakers during the 1957 Assembly on the theme "The transition from Mission to Church". President Devasahayam of the Andhra Church in India and Bishop Dr John Kuder of New Guinea represented sending agencies, younger churches and missionary staff respectively. It was reported that the Finnish Missionary Society received a sufficient foreign exchange grant from the Bank of Finland. Other mission societies and churches were still aided by grants. Among the duties assigned to the LWF Department on World Missions at Hannover, the promotion of cooperation and unity among Lutheran missions and churches in Asia and Africa required that its staff visit the fields and churches as much as possible. In some places they had only been able to witness efforts being made towards unity among the different Lutheran missions. In other instances they had been asked to give advice and have done so to the best of their ability. Then again there were occasions where they felt direct initiative was

required, such as in Japan, Taiwan, Hong Kong, New Guinea, India, Malaysia and Jordan, as well as in new fields such as Ethiopia, Tanganyika, Burma, Western New Guinea and Malaya. One of the key points in this report is the analysis of the differences between Africa and Asia.

In the five years, the main developments from foreign mission to national churches have continued but were of a completely different nature in Asia from those in Africa. It is not enough to give cause for this by saying that Africa is lagging behind Asia politically. There is a very typical development going on in Africa which cannot be found in Asia. If we have lost one great battle in Asia to the great Asian religions in their relations with the new free states of Asia, it is equally true that that battle is still waging in Africa, where there is no other alternative to Christianity than Islam and materialism. Africa may still become the so-called Christian continent and may represent a mediating standpoint between the East



and the West. Our concern for Africa should not however overshadow the fact that the leaven of Christian thought is deeply rooted in many of the states of Asia and nobody can prophesy what eruptive Christian movements may still lie ahead in this old continent. The transition from mission to church is of course, a delicate thing...it is quite understandable that many of the young church leaders would like to advance rapidly, that some of them become impatient with the slow way in which responsibilities are being turned over to them. It is equally understandable that many of the missionaries advise caution, as conscientious builders they dislike to leave a half-completed work, warning that non-theological factors such as political pressure.

(from Dr F. Birkeli's report, LWF director World Mission, p. 32)

Recommendations of the Commission on World Mission

(Source: page 109 of the Proceedings of the LWF Third Assembly, Minneapolis)

The life of the Church is mission. The Church cannot exist without mission and mission cannot exist without the Church. The glorious commission of our Lord to proclaim the Gospel does not belong to one group of people nor to any one time, but to the entire Church, and is in effect until His return. Vast areas are still unreached by the Gospel. In other areas the work is just begun. Eastern and Western churches, facing this task together, have

1957

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been given a unique instrument in the Commission on World Mission of the Lutheran World Federation to implement a united effort in proclaiming the message that sets men free and established them in the fellowship of God. The Commission therefore proposes that this work continue and specifies the following objectives as its immediate concern:

1. To encourage greater unity among the churches. Augustana VII confesses that agreement in the true preaching of the Gospel and administering of the Sacraments constitutes the unity of the Church. We believe that it is pleasing to the Lord that the unity we have as Lutherans be expressed and that divisions among us be healed. It is the task of CWM to call to unity for the proclamation of the gospel that our witness may be clear and strong in reaching out to the ends of the world. As our witness is strengthened we draw closer to other member bodies of the Church Universal in our common tasks.
2. To aid in the establishment of indigenous churches. As the Word is preached and the Sacraments administered churches come into being. These are to develop into self-determining, evangelically active bodies. CWM can stimulate this progress by helping churches to share each other's experiences and by consultation with and encouragement of responsible bodies.
3. To continue to support churches in need. International disturbances and special emergencies have deprived some Lutheran missions and churches in Africa and Asia of needed economic support. Some strategic opportunities for evangelism and church extension will be missed if dependent upon insufficient local resources alone. CWM must, as its resources permit, continue to meet such needs.
4. To sponsor and prepare conferences. CWM has become an agency without parallel in the world for bringing together mission and church agencies from all nations, and has united continents in mutual consultation concerning the mission of the Church. It must continue this service and may also be called upon to sponsor more localized and specially oriented conferences as needs arise.
5. To continue to assist in the education of workers for the churches of Africa and Asia. CWM's scholarship program should continue in aiding members of the churches of Africa and Asia to meet adequately the needs of our revolutionary times. Efforts should also be made to encourage and foster post-ordination opportunities in Africa and Asia for the strengthening of the ministry in our united task.
6. To stimulate and assist our churches to use the new evangelistic possibilities provided by our technological age. The opportunities for Christian radio and audio-visual evangelism have need for development in Asia and Africa. It shall be the task of CWM to encourage and foster these means of evangelism, wherever possible, coordinating the work between missions and churches and seeking to bring these services into the regular channel of the Church.
7. To foster studies of the mission of the Church. Problems confront both churches and missions in this period of rapid development and transition. Studies shall be initiated, stimulated and disseminated that will be of value for a unified approach to these problems, looking toward common satisfactory solutions.

With these objectives and with a burning zeal for the evangelization of the world, CWM offers itself as an instrument in the hands of missions and churches to help complete the unfinished task of the Great Commission.

Commission on
World Mission,
Bukoba,
Tanganyika
(28 August-
September 2).



Outdoor worship at
Kashura church.



Radio Voice of
the Gospel, Addis
Ababa, Ethiopia.



1960

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1963 Fourth LWF Assembly in Helsinki, Finland



The Lutheran churches' common program for mission began even before the outbreak of World War II in response to emergency needs. It has changed and developed much since those early days and assumes an increasingly useful place in the complex structure of the Lutheran missionary enterprise and in the life of the Lutheran churches in Asia and Africa but also now in Europe, Latin America and the Middle East. Commission and Department alike are grateful for the opportunity they had to serve the cause of spreading the Gospel. It is a cause to which our churches must devote themselves with more of love and sacrifice and prayer than we have ever done before.

(conclusion, Helsinki Assembly 7 year report, p. 23, Dr Arne Sovik, director LWF/DWM)

The function of the department and Commission on World Mission had been defined by the LWF Executive Committee as serving the Lutheran churches in their work on the continents of Asia and Africa and their adjacent islands in whatever way was possible and advisable. The Department of World Mission was thus a geographically oriented unit of the LWF. Since 1957, 25 African countries had attained political independence, or at least self-government, and it seemed only a question of time before the last colonies would be free, the impact of this political revolution upon social and religious life was almost impossible to describe. The problems of church structure and organizational development have preoccupied church people and agencies assisting in the Christian mission in Africa. Developments in Asia were less uniform and less easy to characterize as they were focused more on economic issues. In these contexts, the constitutional development of the churches has progressed and with it the corresponding "devolution" of responsibility moved from mission to church. The process was a difficult and complex one. Paradoxically, this attempt to indigenize the church, to make it at home in its environment, required indigenous Christians skills that were foreign to their traditions. They needed to maintain as well as modify the institutions that the missionaries brought. The church executive had to be at home with Western business procedures, although they would need to be modified because these were the procedures that had already become traditions in the church and which, indeed, the churches, as complex and democratic institutions in contact with their sister churches abroad, had to follow. This ambiguous process of indigenization and concomitant internationalization of the church took place in every aspect of its life and led to very considerable practical problems. The dynamics of changing society were, meanwhile, pressing upon the churches, especially the growth of cities. In the years between 1957 and 1963, the number of the LWF member churches from Asia and Africa increased from 11 to 21.

The existence and work of the LWF's Department for World Mission was both a result of and a stimulus toward one of the notable characteristics of the modern

Lutheran missionary movement, namely the development of cooperation and unity. The experience over the years, including increased awareness of the biblical call to unity among brethren in the faith and the practical requirements of the work have combined to encourage this development locally, nationally and internationally. An indication of the trend towards unity in missionary operations is the way missionary societies and boards have learned to cooperate in the field. Out of 50 LWF associated churches in Asia and Africa, 23 are given support in funds and personnel.

(from Dr Arne Sovik, director, Department of World Mission)

1963

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Helsinki Assembly, Report of Section IV, World Missions

(Source: pages 335-342 of the Helsinki Assembly Proceedings)

I. General policy

The Section expresses its conviction that the work of the Commission should continue to be governed according to the basic purposes as outlined in the Policy statement.

II. Coordination of Mission Effort

a) One of the most valuable services rendered by the Commission is that of fostering coordination and partnership between the mission agencies and the churches concerned, and among those churches themselves. The Section recommends that the new Commission continue to seek ways and means for the achievement of these goals as one of its special areas of service.

b) The Section recommends that the Commission and its Department maintain close liaison with the corresponding offices of WCC/DWME regarding ways and means for coordinated effort in all areas of mutual interest and concern.

c) In view of the fact that in the document "Joint Action for Mission" DWME has called the attention of all churches to the need for an examination of the total resources in funds and personnel available to them in particular geographical areas, the Section recommends that the Commission explore all possible ways of implementing such joint action which are not in conflict with the doctrinal position of the LWF.

III. Church Union

a) The Section recommends to churches engaged in union negotiations (both on the inter-Lutheran and inter-confessional level) the two study volumes endorsed by the Commission on Theology: *Das Bekenntnis im Leben der Kirche/The Church and the Confession* and *Kirche und Abendmahl/Church in Fellowship*, and that the Commission make available its consultative services to such churches upon request.

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b) The section transmits the following recommendation passed jointly by the Commissions on World Mission and Theology to the Assembly: "That looking forward to bilateral discussions between Lutherans and Anglicans, particularly in regard to the ministry, the Commission on World Mission request the Assembly to authorize the appointment of a joint committee appointed by the Commissions on Theology and World Mission to study the Lutheran concept of the ministry and the Anglican concept of the ministry, particularly its episcopal order".

c) The Section recommends to the Assembly that rules be worked out governing a relationship to such churches, synods and dioceses which have been members of the LWF in the past, and which after entering into church union with other confessional bodies wish to maintain spiritual relationship with the LWF.

IV Training in Church Leadership

The Section recommends the continuation of the program of scholarships and strengthening of theological training institutes where no adequate provision for such programs has been made by supporting agencies. It is further recommended that the Commission be requested to explore the possibility of conducting training institutes for pastors and other church workers, both men and women, with programs of adequate duration.

V. Specialized Services

This Section recommends that the Commission evaluate the special stewardship education program undertaken in Tanganyika with a view to determining whether such a type of specialized service could be enlarged to include other areas of the churches' life, and to arrange for providing such services to churches which desire them.

VI. Community Development Service

The Section recommends the continuation of the Community Development Liaison and Validation Service as an instrument of great usefulness. The Section expresses its opinion that adequate care should be taken by those who propose and sponsor new projects lest the recipient churches become overburdened with too many and too large institutions.

VII. South African Resettlement Scheme

In view of the plight of the churches in South Africa, which are required to relocate many congregations, and consequently rebuild churches and other buildings because of the Resettlement Scheme, and in view of the magnitude of human and financial problems involved, the Section recommends that the Assembly authorize the Executive Committee to organise financial assistance to the Lutheran Churches concerned and to assist them in negotiations with the Government of South Africa, if that is desired.

VIII. The Missionary Task of the Churches

A. The Section recommends that the new Commission devote particular attention to specific ways and means of fostering and strengthening the missionary consciousness of all churches.

B. 1. The former differentiation between sending churches and mission fields (or receiving churches) has become obsolete. The missionary task of the Church is rightly recognized as the task of the whole Church and destined for the whole world. The Section feels that the limitation of the scope for the Commission to Asia and Africa only – which had historical and practical reasons – should be removed and the entire task of mission and evangelism throughout the world should come under the purview of a new single Commission.

2. The missionary task of the Church has been widened in another respect, i.e. it comprises the witness by word and deed, as well as by the worship and the life of the Christian community. Further, it is in the interest of all Member Churches that in order to safeguard the proper integration and coordination of all functions of the Church, Mission and Service should not operate separately. The need for such integration has time and again caused a positive seeking and inauguration of coordinated effort with World service. The Section feels therefore that the services of World Service and World Mission should be integrated into one Commission served by one Department.

3. The above proposals presuppose the implementation of the alternate proposal before the LWF Executive Committee regarding the merger of the two Commissions. The work of the new single Department should be primarily distributed along geographical lines with the addition of necessary functional desks which, for example, would deal with Radio evangelism, Medical Missions, relief and Rehabilitation, etc...It would also require that the tasks of the former Commission on Inner Mission, stewardship and Congregational Life, as far as evangelism is concerned, be assumed by the new Commission on World Mission and Service.



Dr F. Birkeli,
LWF director World
Mission with
Bishop S. Moshi
from Tanzania.

1965



Commission of
World Mission in
Jerusalem.



Commission of
World Mission
Ecumenical
participants at
Commission of
World Mission in
Jerusalem.

1966



Commission on
World Mission,
Oxford, United
Kingdom.



Commission on
World Mission.
Chairman:
the Rt. Rev. Helge
Fosseus – South
Africa, second from
the left and
The Rev. Dr Samuel
E. Kidd, USA (vice
chairman).

Bishop Mshlumgu, South Africa (left) talking to two young women African participants.



The Rt. Rev. Dr Heinrich Meyer, Germany (chairman of the Commission from 1963 – 1965), member of the Commission on the right, next to him Rev. Dr André Appel, LWF General Secretary.



Rev. Dr Gudina Tumsa, General Secretary of the Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus, Ethiopia (left) later killed by the Ethiopian government.

1967

1968

I AM NOT ASHAMED OF THE GOSPEL

1970 Fifth LWF Assembly in Evian, France

The Commission on World Mission at its meeting in Saint Louis, USA, with the support of the area consultations in Indonesia and India had recommended to the Executive Committee at Evian that the name of the new Commission on Church Cooperation be changed to Commission on Church Cooperation in World Mission. The Assembly was meeting under the theme “Sent into the World”, and because mission is essential to the life of the church some felt that the deletion of the word “mission” was a betrayal of the theme. Precisely because mission was being critiqued, it was argued that it was necessary to retain it in a comprehensive way. Concern was expressed regarding the place of mission in the LWF. Mission implies more than cooperation, it means proclamation, and therefore the word “mission” is necessary, the argument went. In support of the name “Church Cooperation” others pointed out that the word “mission” was ambiguous and had negative connotations, such as the historical connection between mission and colonialism. Further misunderstanding arose in regard to mission as a function of the Western churches, the “mission status” of the younger churches, as well as regarding the connotation of proselytism. The constitution of the LWF and the terms of reference of the commission clearly pointed to mission as a task of the church. Mission, however, is not a function of the LWF, but a function of the churches. The LWF assists the churches to cooperate in their mission. From the point of view of the minority churches, ecumenical cooperation with other churches might become more difficult in some areas. The Assembly voted 115 to 58 to retain the name “Commission on Church Cooperation”. From Evian onwards the concept of “Mission on six continents” was also widely accepted.

The task of this Commission according to Kibira in his report to its yearly Ccommission meeting in Villach, Austria in 1972 “is to support all Lutheran churches and groups to carry out the mission imperative of our Lord. How are we going to help the churches in Europe and North America to evangelize in their situation?” He warned of the old unrealistic missionary thinking that “heathenism” is bound to Africa, Asia, and Latin America and that Europe and North America were to regard those heathen countries as their target for missionary activities. “It is mere pride for any church to try to minimize or underestimate the stand of another church due to its young age or poor economic situation and for this reason regard it as a field for displaying man’s superiority and pride, theologically and economically. How are we going to reinstitute a missionary zeal in Europe and North America? Heathens in those countries are just as heathen as those anywhere else where they are found. The older churches for a long time preferred to escape from missionary concerns around them by going abroad. Why not start at home?”

(Bishop Josiah Kibira of Bukoba)

Evian Assembly statement on the LWF's Role in World Mission

(Source: page 153 of the Evian Assembly Proceedings)

Whereas the role of the LWF in the field of world mission has been discussed in this Assembly, and whereas this Assembly has sanctioned to omit the word mission in the name of the Commission now taking over the responsibility hitherto carried on by CWM, and whereas strong concerns have been expressed that the LWF's role in the task of world mission be clarified, the Assembly calls the attention of member churches especially to the report of Section I at this Assembly dealing with our obligation in mission and the power of the gospel in mission where it is stated:

"We believe that just as Jesus Christ was sent by God into the world to redeem the world, so we have been sent by Jesus joyfully to proclaim the gospel in love and with justice. The power of the gospel is evident to us when we both individually and as a church are confronted with our own sin, impossible to repair, in our confrontation with our own death, impossible to avoid, and in our confrontation with the total need of mankind, impossible to neglect.

Jesus Christ who himself is the gospel, has descended to our anguish. To accept the fact that I am a sinner, and that I, in spite of that, receive a new life and am called to a new service, is to have forgiveness of sins through the cross of Christ. To accept the fact that death is at the door before us, but that we, in spite of this fact, go from life to life, is to receive the resurrection of the dead through the resurrection of Christ. Through this same gospel we are set free to fulfill the will of God. To accept the fact that the needs of our neighbours direct our deeds and actions in our service to the Lord obligates us to a constant review of our ministry to the world. The service which we thereby receive from Christ as members of his body, gives us the power to fulfill this ministry, even in a hostile environment. In these confrontations the Holy Spirit also today through the gospel gives us power to live and serve and celebrate. This power we cannot receive without being sent to the world, and in our going out to witness and serve we are receiving this power according to our needs."

According to this conviction the Lutheran World Federation urges its member churches and related agencies faithfully to work for the proclamation of the gospel to all nations.

We furthermore call attention to the terms of reference for the Commission on Church Cooperation where it expresses that it on its part will continue to support Lutheran churches and groups as they endeavor to carry out the mission imperative of the Lord. It will continue to facilitate contacts and exchange of resources, information, counsel, in such a way as to strengthen the life and witness of related churches in all parts of the world. It will provide programs requested by member churches where it is not feasible for the churches to conduct programs themselves. In this endeavor it will also continue to provide for meetings of churches, mission societies, and related organizations on a global or regional basis as necessary.

1970

The change of the name of the commission and department, from “World Mission” to “Church Cooperation” was a significant signal of a changing paradigm in line with global ecumenical developments of the time. And for the first time, a chairperson of the commission was chosen from the South, in the person of Bishop Josiah Kibira from Tanzania, who seven years later became the president of the LWF. He is remembered for his provocative challenges to think about mission as indeed a universal assignment of all churches in the six continents.

1971



LWF Commission on Church Cooperation, Tokyo, Japan, May 1971
One hundred and fifty churchmen gathered for a LWF sponsored consultation on Lutheranism in an ecumenical age, the first such LWF Conference of this scope on Japanese soil. At a communion service, Bishop Josiah Kibira (Bukoba, Tanzania) chairman of the Federations' Commission on Church Cooperation administer communion to a participant after a weeklong consultation.



Miss Hinoko Tsuge of the Japan Evangelical Lutheran Church with Rev. R. Boll from Porte Alegre, Brazil.

LWF Commission
on Church
Cooperation,
Santiago, Chile,
May 3-11.



Women and men
participants to
the Commission
meeting in Chile.



From left: Rev. Dr
André Appel, LWF
General Secretary;
Bishop Zoltan
Kaldy, future LWF
President and
Bishop Hueber.



LWF Commission on Church Cooperation,
Lund, Sweden May 20-29
Global mission concerns are discussed
here during a break between sessions
of the annual meeting of the Lutheran
World Federation's Commission on
Church Cooperation. From left to right:
Dr Carl-Johan Hellberg, director of the
Department of Church Cooperation,
Dr Kunchala Rajaratnam, secretary of
the Federation of Evangelical Lutheran
Churches in India and LWF General
Secretary André Appel. Dr Rajaratnam
was elected to become the next Asia
secretary in the Department on Church
Cooperation, succeeding Dr Won Yong Ji
of Korea in mid 1975.



1973

1974

I AM NOT ASHAMED OF THE GOSPEL

27

1976



LWF Commission on Church Cooperation, Saskatoon, Canada, June.



Bishop Josiah Kibira, future LWF President, with Rev. Gunnar Staalsett, future LWF General Secretary.



Rev. Dr Christian Krause (left), future LWF President with Rev. Dr Carl Mau, future LWF General Secretary.

Right at the door of the room where we are meeting in Western countries you find “material worshippers”. The churches of Europe are getting emptier and emptier. How are all these people to be brought back to God? And in the countries where segregation because of colour persists, a Tanzanian Christian’s wish is that the people who cling to this could be evangelized”....One wonders why the Commission on World Mission has never come to the realization that Europe and America need missionaries”.

(Source: *Bishop Josiah Kibira of Bukoba* by Per Larsson, p. 36)

Sixth LWF Assembly in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania

1977

The first sub-theme was “In Christ – Together in Mission”. The report of this sub-theme seminar made clear that there is a continuing need for redefining mission in the midst of changing circumstances. The seminar presented the following statement and the Assembly resolved to adopt it:

Statement of the Dar es Salaam Assembly: A challenge to the churches

(Source: page 173 of the Dar es Salaam Assembly Proceedings)

We are in mission because of God’s free act of justifying sinners and his grace which overflows in love, joy, peace and praise in the new community.

We are incorporated into the new community and commissioned for witness and service by baptism as members of a universal priesthood.

We affirm participation in mission as the task of every Christian and of every congregation.

We acknowledge that the task of reaching every person and group with the good news of God’s saving grace and the offer of baptism into Christ remains far from finished.

We therefore urge all member churches to intensify their efforts toward the evangelization of those who do not know or acknowledge Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior.

We also call upon the churches to undertake the equally important and demanding task of re-evangelizing those who, through baptized, are not living out their baptism in the world as members of the new community.

We plead with churches everywhere that they take seriously their obligation to motivate, educate and equip their members for their calling as committed disciples and joyous witnesses to the Good News that in Jesus Christ God grants new life and hope to all who believe.

We implore member churches on all six continents to unite their strength in partnership and under the Lordship of Jesus Christ to support one another in carrying out the unfinished task in all the earth.

1977

The Assembly acted on further recommendations as follows:

(Source: Page 196 of the Dar es Salaam Assembly Proceedings)

The Assembly resolved to encourage the member churches to make increased use of Christian education at all levels, including the family, as a means of strengthening or initially creating a conscious sense of mission identity, in each member of the community.

The Assembly resolved to request the Lutheran World Federation to serve as a collective servant of the member churches in the development of an overall mission strategy, including study of, planning for and suggesting proposals for action on all six continents; this strategy should include:

- Particular emphasis on preaching the gospel to those who have not heard,
- Re-evangelization of nominal Christians,
- Involvement of such action groups as non-member churches, mission agencies and other interested groups.

The Assembly resolved to refer to the Executive Committee for consideration of the following proposals:

1. That the Lutheran World Federation consider devising, with all member churches, a means of sharing skills and techniques for training persons sent to other countries.
2. That the Lutheran World Federation assist the churches in providing liturgical material and current explanations of Luther's small Catechism relevant to the situations in the various countries and regions.
3. That the Lutheran World Federation seek ways to strengthen ecumenical cooperation in mission and encourage some member churches to develop models for ecumenical evangelization and to share the information and experience gained from such models with all member churches.

1978



LWF Commission meeting in Montreux, Switzerland (23-29 April). President Paul Darman of the Lutheran Church in Cameroon (left) listen as Dr Kunchala Rajaratman, Asia Secretary of the LWF Department of Church Cooperation, talks. In the centre is Dr Thomas G. Edward of the United Evangelical Lutheran Churches in India.



When thanking his commissioners after the whole period of work in 1977, LWF President Kibira (1977-1984) and former chairperson of the Commission on World Mission reiterated: "I hope our interpretation and understanding will be kept in mind by all churches, so that none of them will continue to regard themselves as either "giver" or "receiver" only, but both, in every country. We are in fact at the beginning of a new missionary era".

1978

I AM NOT ASHAMED OF THE GOSPEL

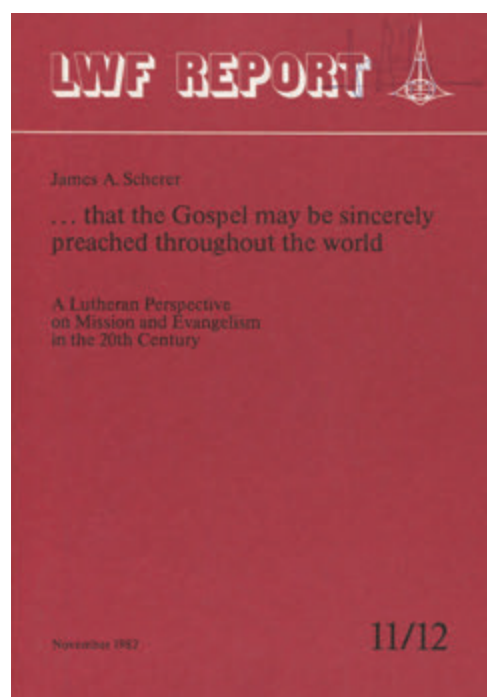
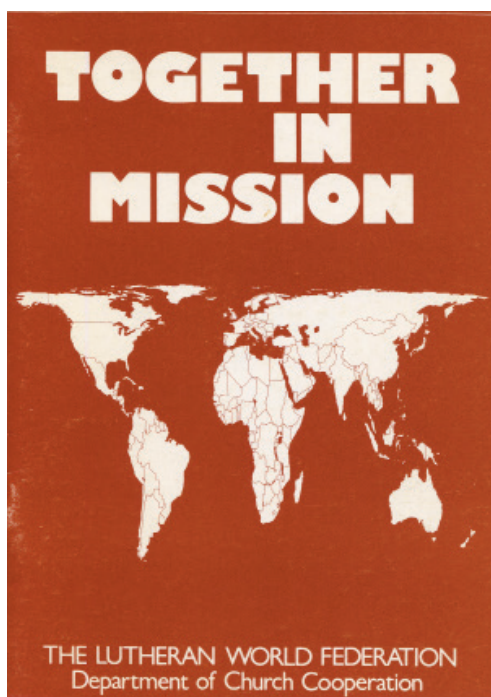


LWF Commission meeting in Montreux, Switzerland (23-29 April).

Dr Emilio Castro (standing) director of the World Council of Churches Commission on World Mission and Evangelism, was a participant in an ecumenical panel discussion held at the meeting of the LWF Commission on Church Cooperation. Participants in the panel included a representative from the Vatican, the WCC Commission on Faith and Order and the "evangelical" churches. Also pictured are:(from left) Rev. George Posfay, Latin American secretary for the LWF department of church cooperation, Dr James Scherer, commission chairman and Bishop Sebastian Kolowa, vice-chairman of the Commission.

1984 Seventh LWF Assembly in Budapest, Hungary

A study was prepared as background material for the LWF Interregional Consultation on Mission and Evangelism, under the auspices of the LWF Commission on Church Cooperation, before the LWF Seventh Assembly in Budapest, Hungary in 1984. The aim of this conference was to bring together the main findings of the series of LWF regional consultations on mission strategy held since 1977, and also to reflect on the significance of the 1980 Melbourne Conference of the World Council of Churches (WCC) Commission on World Mission and Evangelization.



The Sixth Assembly, held in Dar es Salaam in 1977, urged all member churches to intensify their mission outreach both locally and globally. Response to this challenge was positive, and there was a renewal of mission consciousness in the LWF member churches. At the same time, it became evident that there was a need for a Lutheran statement on mission in order to assist the member churches in their theological and practical efforts. One step in this direction was the development of a “Working paper on Mission”, which was approved by the Commission on Church Cooperation in 1984 and presented to the Assembly as working documentation. The LWF member churches were struggling with the challenge of Christ’s call to faith among those who hear the word of God for the first time and among baptized persons whose faith is not active (re-evangelization). Through consultation and the exchange of personnel, the member churches were encouraged to assist each other in developing and supporting effective outreach ministries and in equipping persons, lay and clergy, to share the Good News. Congregations were urged to act as sources of nurture and education to assist persons to grow up in and hold fast to their faith and to proclaim their faith in word and deed.

Resolutions on mission at the Budapest Assembly

(Source: pages 188-189 of the Budapest Assembly Proceedings)

Recognizing that mission is central to the nature of the church and its theology, the Seventh Assembly RESOLVED:

- 1.1 To encourage member churches to take the three following steps:
 - 1.1.1 To see to it that this understanding of the church in mission penetrates the whole of their theological teachings and all of their ministries and parish practices.
 - 1.1.2 To ensure that mission theology and practice is taught at all levels so that both laity and clergy will be theologically equipped for the contemporary mission task.
 - 1.1.3 To take into account the ecumenical perspective and wherever possible, carry out mission in cooperation with other churches in a given area. The urgency of the missionary task, in the present context and on all continents, calls the churches to intensify their own mission efforts as well as their joint action in mission.
- 1.2 To adopt the following LWF guidelines for joint action in mission:
 - 1.2.1 There are two general guidelines for all joint action in mission: Mission is the common responsibility of every Christian, every congregation and every church; and mission in each place is the privilege and common responsibility of the worldwide church.
 - 1.2.2 The primary responsibility for responding to mission challenges in a given area rests with the local church or churches acting on behalf of the church universal.
 - 1.2.3 Each church's experiences, insights, theological heritage, and personnel and financial resources are gifts from God for the mission of the whole church. They therefore cannot be considered as its sole possessions but are to be shared.
 - 1.2.4 If the local church does not have sufficient resources for responding to its mission challenges, it shall seek cooperation with neighbouring churches as well as with other churches that can contribute complementary experiences and insights.
 - 1.2.5 Acknowledging Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, every joint action in mission is to be designed to manifest the unity of the church across ethnic, social and cultural boundaries, and should also reflect the different cultural backgrounds and social contexts of the people for whom missionary proclamation is intended.
 - 1.2.6 Joint actions should be directed toward the whole human being, seeking close linkage between the evangelistic and service arms of the churches in ways best suited within each context.
 - 1.2.7 Every church involved in joint actions in mission is to assure its share of financing such actions.
 - 1.2.8 The funding level of joint mission projects should be in proportion to the standard of living in the area and in line with the available material resources of the local churches.
 - 1.2.9 While all participating churches shall be involved in the planning and decision for joint action for mission, the local church in the

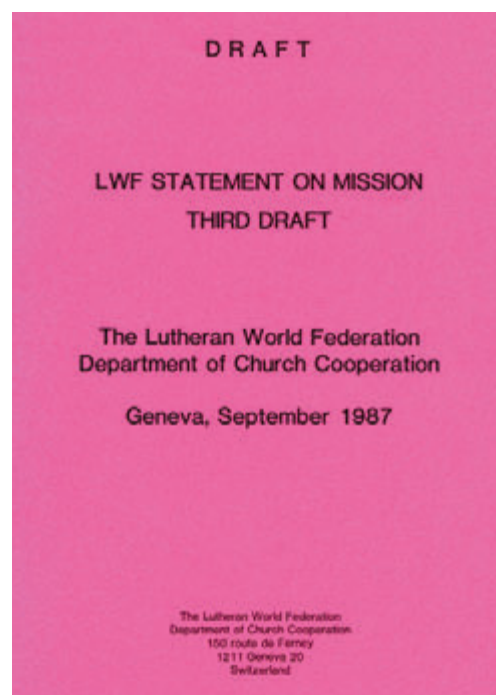
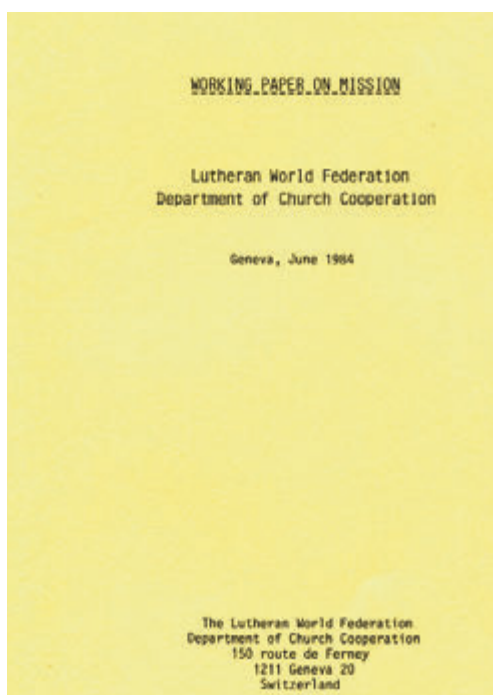
1984

area concerned shall also be fully involved in such activity from the very beginning.

- 1.2.10 If a church is not aware of its mission responsibilities or opportunities, churches both nearby and in other areas of the world should initiate conversations with that church, encourage it to accept the challenges at hand, and offer advice and assistance as necessary.
- 1.2.11 If joint actions are planned in areas where no local church exists, churches from closely related areas should be involved.
- 1.2.12 The LWF is to assist its member churches in meeting a particular mission challenge in a variety of ways, depending on the scope of the challenge according to its mandate.

The Seventh Assembly received the “Working paper on Mission” developed by the Commission on Church Cooperation (CCC) between the Dar es Salaam and Budapest Assemblies, and that this be transmitted to churches and mission organizations for study and comment.

1987



Rev. Risto
Lehtonen, director,
Department of
Church Cooperation
01.10.1978 to
30.09.1987.



For the first time, the Lutheran World Federation held joint commission meetings (Communication, Church cooperation, Studies, World Service).

Together in God's mission

In 1984, the Seventh Assembly assigned DCC/CCC the task of developing and publishing a document on mission theology, which was produced in 1988 as *Together in God's mission: An LWF contribution to the Understanding of Mission*.

The commission established an international working group to draft the text, and determine the structure and content of the statement. The second draft was approved in principle by the CCC in April 1987, and the third draft (shown above in pink) was sent to the member churches and related organizations for review. The fourth draft, based on those recommendations was submitted to the commission in 1988; it recommended the document to the Executive Committee in 1988, where it was approved for publication. It emphasized that mission encompasses proclamation, service and advocacy for justice.

The purposes of the statement were to help all Lutheran churches become more aware of God's mission in the world, and better understand the role of the universal church as it participates in that mission. It also aimed to serve as an instrument for renewing commitment to that mission among Lutheran churches and their local congregations, to stimulate further cooperation among themselves and other churches for the sake of a united witness before the world to the gospel of Jesus Christ, a task to which the LWF is committed by its constitution. The paper presented the theological understanding of mission from the perspective of the Trinity. The ecumenical creeds were approached from the diverse contextual experiences of LWF member churches in order to examine what confession of the triune God meant for mission at that time. Mission was defined as God's saving work, and the church's participation in that work, while respecting different uses and traditions of mission. It was hoped that LWF churches would seriously study and apply this document within their contexts.

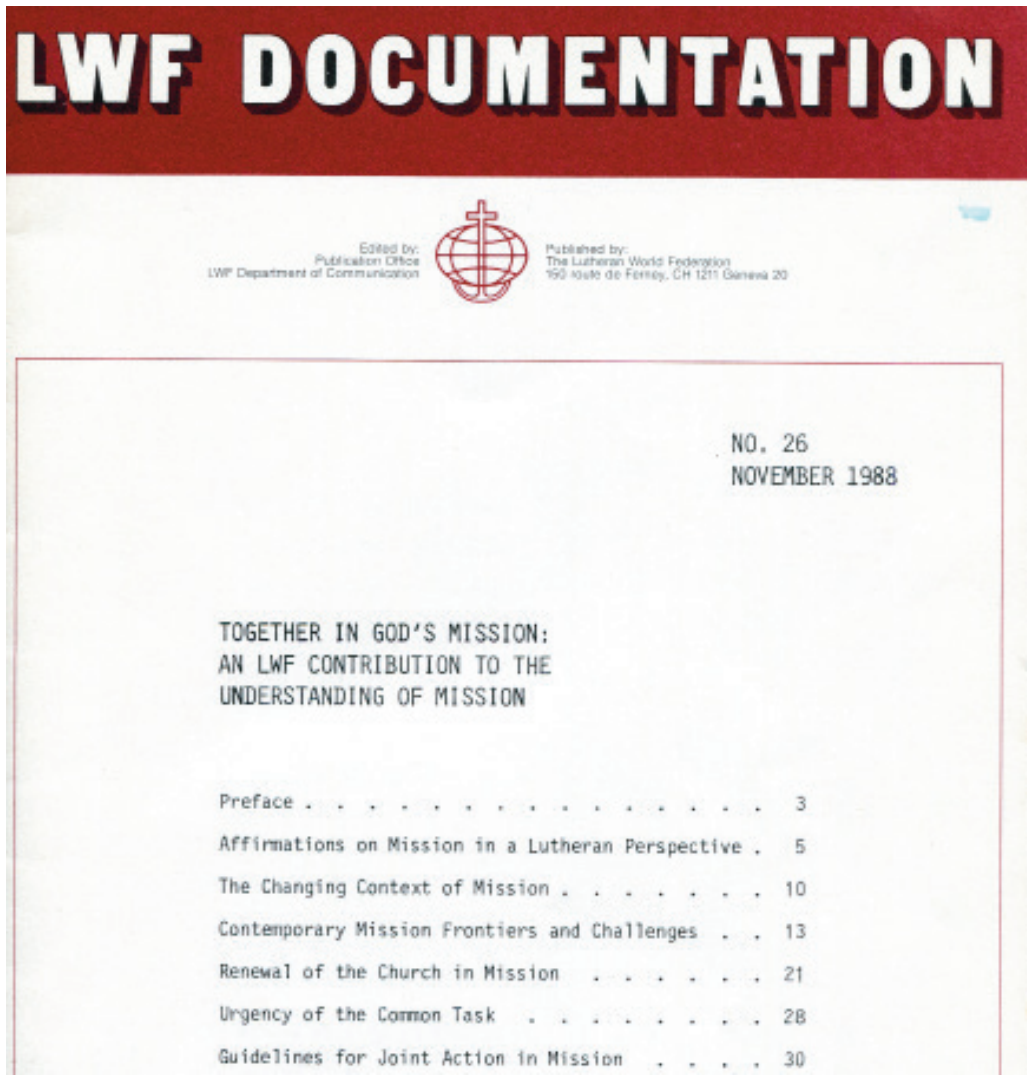
(Source: p. 106-107 in the *Report of Church Cooperation, from Budapest to Curitiba*)

1987

1988

I AM NOT ASHAMED OF THE GOSPEL

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Eighth LWF Assembly in Curitiba, Brazil

1990

The terms of reference for the CCC and the related department state that it is to be the LWF's department responsible for the promotion and facilitation of the Lutheran churches' cooperation in mission and mutual sharing of resources among member churches. The LWF Seventh Assembly resolutions and recommendations also emphasized mission in a broader sense, thus underscoring the LWF's commitment to the struggle against racism, poverty, economic and social injustice, and its concern for ecumenical relationships and peace. Efforts have been made since then to understand God's mission and the mission of the church as stated in LWF Document No 26, *"Together in God's Mission: An LWF contribution to the Understanding of Mission"*, published in November 1988.

Moving beyond a theological approach to mission, the document affirmed action and introduced plans to draw LWF member churches and their organizations into developing a common approach to mission practice. Increased efforts and initiatives were being made towards youth and urban ministries. Churches were reminded of the need to re-evangelize traditionally Christian parts of the world. CCC/DCC found new meaning in partnership. Churches in Africa, Asia and Latin America became more independent of their mission partners, decreasing paternalism. Churches experienced community in Christ, as they set their own priorities and pursued ecumenical cooperation. By 1990, the department had four area desks: Asia, Africa, Europe and Latin America and the Caribbean, plus the youth and students program. DCC responsibility was in two categories: area programs and global and functional programs. Each area served as a liaison and resource for all LWF member churches.

(Report from Budapest to Curitiba p. 67-68)

In Africa in 1990, most of the LWF member churches had active mission programs and were succeeding in new regions. The Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus gained 230,000 new members and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania (ELCT) 321,013 between 1984 and 1988 and the ELCT had sent missionaries to Malawi, Zambia, Burundi and Mozambique. In 1990, 18 African churches were members of the LWF.

LWF meetings and activities have solidified cooperation among established churches, facilitating exchanges for church workers and leaders. Theological institutions were available to students from churches lacking facilities. Intra-regional visits were arranged for youth and women. In 1986, DCC created joint mission boards in Malawi and Mozambique to encourage cooperation between the African churches interested in mission, as well as mission agencies and societies from other continents. Mission was also developed in cities and industrial areas in Africa.

In Asia in 1990, there were 33 LWF member churches from 12 different countries, with a total of 4.6 million members, stretching from the Middle East to the South Pacific. Asian churches have focused on urban ministry, ministry to seafarers, peace in the Holy Land, theological education and scholarship programs. The DCC Asia desk continued to encourage cooperation between various coordinating and joint committees in the regions, such as joint regional organizations in India, Malaysia, Hong Kong, Taiwan and Japan.

1990

The DCC Europe Desk aimed to facilitate cooperation among Lutheran churches in Europe. Among the 36 LWF member churches in that region, there were large state and territorial churches as well as smaller minority churches in Southern, Eastern and Western Europe, recognizing that each church was an equal partner in the communion. Twenty-one member churches existed in diaspora situations. In 1983, LWF statistics showed a membership of 40,293,122. In 1986, the figure was 39,239,289, a decline of over one million since the most recent LWF Assembly, a development which caused churches to re-examine their responsibilities for community and mission. "How can they reach the secularized population with the Gospel?" Mission and evangelism at home is a priority. CCC/DCC consider Mission and Evangelism in Europe and North America to be vital.

(P. 85, *LWF Report from Budapest to Curitiba, Church Cooperation Report*)

In Latin America and the Caribbean, there were 10 member churches and seven recognized congregations totaling 1.2 million Lutherans. The call of the gospel mixed with other circumstances to compel the church to see its mission to be one of transforming action and prophetic word that included solidarity with popular movements, a call for conversion, diaconal action, the proclamation of the gospel and the search for new members. The CCC/DCC assisted in mission with conferences, workshops, visitation programs, consultative services. In addition, financial aid was provided, supporting programs ranging from mission and witness to renewed evangelization, theological and Christian education, leadership training and ecumenical commitments. Challenged by increased migration and subsequent urbanization, the churches concentrated their mission symposia on urban ministries to migrants. Case studies were developed in three cities: Bogota, Caracas and Mexico City.



Delegate from Colombia
Edna Chaparro.



Introduction to Bible study, Brazilian participants on stage at the LWF Curitiba Assembly, Brazil.

Christian Witness in a Secularized Society

(Source: p. 84-85 Curitiba Assembly Proceedings)

Secularization contributes to the loss of religious and symbolic language and of rites and rituals which previously served to integrate the life of the community. This fact renders the communication of the Gospel difficult in societies in which Christianity once dominated. Biblical Knowledge and basic Christian understanding cannot be assumed as in former generations. Idols of technology and materialism and the compulsion to achieve replace traditional values. The pursuit of wealth becomes an overriding preoccupation. Science may offer answers to many problems facing humanity, but it also presents new threats to the integrity and survival of creation...Secularization is an ambiguous phenomenon. Positively it helps curtail religious intolerance, eliminate fanaticism and encourage respect for others...Secularization also limits the outward power of religious institutions and liberates people to take full responsibility for building human institutions. Negatively, secularization undermines religious practice and contributes to the disintegration of commonly held values in society. As young people at this Assembly have dramatically pointed out, secularization liberates people from certain structures of oppression, but it can also enslave people with unbridled notions of progress. In some areas, people who are not members of the church still actively support values and programs of the church. In times of crisis, the church can become a haven for a variety of movements in secular societies.

At the heart of the church's encounter with secularization is the deepening and renewal of faith and spirituality. It is as an inclusive, participatory, sacramental community where the living word addresses the realities of life, that the church can face secularization with confidence and hope.

Prophetic witness, in obedience to God's word, involves confrontation with certain societal values, especially those promoting new forms of idolatry or seeking human fulfillment apart from God. Any prophetic witness involves both careful listening to the cries of the people and the word of God. Ecumenical sensitivity is crucial.

The church's clear witness in public affairs and its advocacy for justice strengthens its credibility in a secular world though this witness sometimes causes divisions within the body of believers.

The diaconal witness of the church is often better understood than words. As the church decides and acts together with the marginalized and displaced, young and old, women and men, it gives witness to God's all-embracing grace.

Christians should strive to counter the pervasive individualism characteristic of secular societies and reach out to the neighbour, in time of loss, need, joy and isolation, and create communities of faith and action. They should invite the pilgrim of our time to rest and retreat.

1990

I AM NOT ASHAMED OF THE GOSPEL

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Dialogue with scientists, political leaders, artists, writers and others who give voice to people, offers the church as an opportunity to help and be helped to shape both its own and society's future.

Secularization poses new challenges to the church everywhere. Research and study, not least of the crises and opportunities of "folk churches", North and South, redefinition of the church's self-understanding, strategies and programs, and most of all renewal of faith in the Triune God and commitment to the life of the world will help the Lutheran Communion to face the future with confidence. At the same time, the church will have to recognize its own participation in and interwovenness with the secular society and see the danger of reflecting secular values in its own teaching and structures. A witness flowing out of powerlessness, vulnerability and suffering is more credible than one emanating from power and influence.

Commitments

1. As our response to secularization, we commit ourselves to make every effort to equip the church and all its members for a diaconic, dialogical and prophetic ministry in the secular world.
2. Through educational programs, by sharing experience and insights with people, working in science and technology, and by seeking to recover and renew religious and symbolic language, people should be enabled to exercise the priesthood of all believers in their daily life.
3. Our most urgent need is to strengthen faith and deepen the spiritual life of believers. We should work for the renewal of worship so that the gifts of all are full utilized. Small groups, where faith and life concerns are held together, could give strength to Christians who witness to the gospel by seeking justice and building fully inclusive communities.

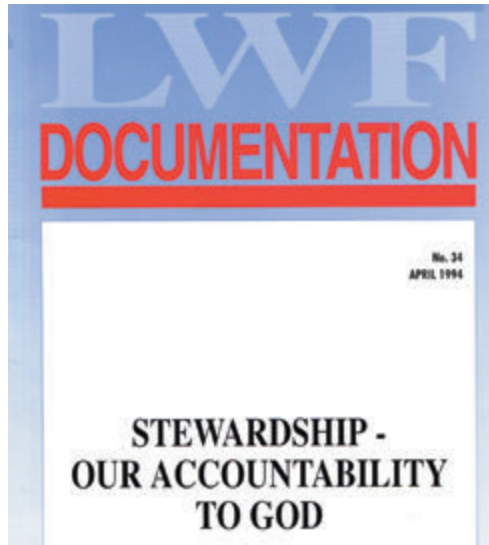
Two Council committees were created at the Eighth Assembly in Curitiba: the Program Committee for Mission and Development and the LWF Project Committee. They both helped in the design of programs and activities to assist member churches. In his address to the Eighth Assembly on the restructuring and constitution of the LWF, Bishop James Crumley explained (p. 139 Assembly Report)

The specific assignment of the Department for Mission and Development is to encourage and support Lutheran churches, agencies, and other groups as they endeavour to create, develop, and maintain ministries faithful to the fundamental task of the church to participate in the whole mission of God to the whole world." To fulfill that assignment and to clarify the ways in which mission and development belong together in ministry, this new grouping of functions is far more coherent than what we now have. That rearrangement is chiefly effected by the task given to the Department for Mission and Development. At the present time several functions are scattered and we feel they should be pulled together in one department that will provide greater theological and programmatic integrity for them such as the community development services, consultative services in communication and the system of program desks: women, youth, Christian education and scholarships.

At Curitiba, the names of the commission and department were changed from “Church Cooperation” to “Mission and Development.” The development agenda had found its way into the mainstream of church vocabulary, and it went on to shape the programs of this department, influenced by the funding of “back-donors.” The pendulum was swinging again, as Kiriba seven years before had depicted:



Rev. Dr Ismael Noko, director, Department for Mission and Development, 01.10.1987 to 31.10.1994.



1990

1993

In 1990, the LWF member churches, in Assembly in Curitiba, Brazil, authorized a restructuring of the organization for the sake of improving its coordination and unity of purpose. This led to the creation of new departments and units, one of which was the Department for Mission and Development (DMD). According to the LWF Documentation No 34: *Stewardship – Our accountability to God*, the publication of the 1993 consultation (p. 6 - 17), “the department’s name has raised not only questions, but eyebrows, as to the connection between two different and independent areas of concern”, wrote the then DMD director, Rev. Dr Ishmael Noko.

“Missio Dei” refers to “God’s saving work and to the church’s participation in that work” and yet we must register in passing that there are still individuals to this day who feel very uncomfortable with the word “mission”, and who prefer to replace it with “evangelism” because it conjures in their minds a painful history of colonialism, the annexation of land and the displacement of indigenous communities. Since the role played by the mission organizations at that time has been reviewed critically in some instances, within this distinct and limited use of the word “mission” by the church, there are emphases that are due to contextual difference, i.e. mission as social justice (M. M. Thomas), mission as church growth, mission as a preferential option for the poor and mission as liberation of the oppressed. All these emphases seek to speak about God’s act of renewal, recreation—making things new. They are dimensions of the creation-encompassing mission of God. Diaconia and evangelism are therefore integral elements of mission.

Mindful of this diffusion of the concept and the lack of finality on the definition, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America’s Division for Global Mission (ELCA/DGM) in a policy statement concerning development said the following:

A process that leads to improving the quality of life of people. It ensures their cultural, social, political, spiritual and economic well being through a participatory and integrated process of empowerment, self-reliance, regeneration and removal of obstacles to this process. It is a process that leads to a better life for the people and society. (*Beyond Development to Transformation, International Review of Mission*, Vol. LXXIII, No 290, April 1984, p. 156)

1993

There are theological and missiological reasons for holding together “mission” and “development”. Biblical and the Christian creedal statements claim that God is the creator of “heaven and earth”, God created humankind in God’s image (imago Dei) to have dominion (not domination) over creation. The motivation for the church’s participation in development and therefore for holding “mission” and “development” in balance is based on the confession that creation belongs to God and to no one else. From the perspective of this claim, development as human engagement in renewal of people and society is understood as human activity in God’s incomprehensible plan for the transformation of creation. It includes a renewal of humankind, including the social structures that oppress and enslave... God’s redemptive work is people centered...and in God’s mission, accountable participation is a crucial Christian characteristic.

1997 Ninth LWF Assembly in Hong Kong, China

From the LWF seven-year report From Curitiba to Hong Kong 1990-1997, the passages on the DMD cover pages 93 to 135. They explain that the restructuring of the LWF in 1990 was intended to bring coordination and unity of purpose to the organization. The DMD was created to embody the concept of holistic ministry, which refers to the nature of the mission of the church in the world, namely, proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ and the coming of the kingdom of God in words and deeds. Cooperation, coordination, and consultancy work with Lutheran churches, agencies, and other groups have all been tangibly strengthened.

Through DMD, the LWF’s primary aim is:

1. Empowerment of churches, assisting them in their effort to make the good news of Jesus Christ a reality in the lives of people around them; and
2. Empowerment of communities, especially society’s marginalized and excluded, enabling them to create for themselves a dignified life of peace in justice.

In order to fulfill this aim, the LWF has tried to facilitate meaningful relationships between the churches in the Lutheran communion. In their long-range planning, staff focused this assignment into three areas: coordination (sharing and use of spiritual, human and material resources), consultancy (health, rural development, management skills, communication and church administration) and advocacy (for justice to be the voice of the often ignored or excluded groups in church and society). Programs are defined as events or activities involving more than one church, on either regional or global levels, and are screened and approved by the Program Committee. A project is an event or activity involving only one church. Projects may be mission, development or communication oriented and are dealt with by the Project Committee which reports to the Council through the Program Committee for Mission and Development. The commitments and recommendations made at the Eighth Assembly served as a paradigm for the Program and Project Committees and staff to plan ministries with member churches in their diverse contexts, traditions and histories. As a response to the needs and priorities of the churches, more than a hundred workshops, seminars and consultations have been organized. The issues addressed included challenges of developing innovative mission activities and forms of cooperation,

social concerns resulting from urbanization, ecclesiology and ministries, justice, peace and the integrity of creation, joint mission ventures through the sharing of personnel, health issues such as HIV and AIDS, and developing human resources.

1997

Ninth LWF Assembly in Hong Kong Resolutions

(Source: page 63 of the Hong Kong Assembly Report)

Aware of the manifold activities in the recent work of the LWF which were mission oriented, and in order to strengthen the emphasis on evangelization in mission, the Council VOTED:

- To affirm mission and evangelism as central to the task of the Federation and the member churches, and to ensure that the relevant department coordinate their work on this emphasis,
- To ensure that high priority be given to inspiring and strengthening member churches for authentic and culture sensitive witnessing to Christ in an increasingly plural and multi-religious world
- To call member churches to fresh engagement in common witness in each local place and all places, and to give attention to how the ecumenical task of realizing unity among churches might find expression in mission and evangelization
- To ensure that the exchange of experiences on mission praxis between the member churches be taken seriously.



Professor Choong Chee Pang, Lutheran Church in Malaysia and Singapore, keynote speaker at the LWF Ninth Assembly; on the right LWF treasurer Sigrun Modgedal from Norway and on the left Nickey Lazarus Gaseb from Namibia.

1997

Professor Choong tells his missionary story within his Assembly keynote speech:

“...1997 is also the 50th anniversary of the founding of the Lutheran World Federation as a Communion of churches. The year 1997 also has particular significance for my own Christian discipleship and pilgrimage. It happens to be the 40th anniversary of my own conversion. I was baptized on Easter Day in the year 1957 at the aged of 15.

This was how it began: A united Lutheran mission consisting of missionaries from Hong Kong, North America, Germany and Scandinavia came to West Malaysia in the 1950s. I was only a very young school kid when I was first approached by some Lutheran missionaries who served in my humble village and the neighboring regions, some 200 kilometers north of Kuala Lumpur. Typically of most Chinese in South East Asia, my religio-cultural background was a mixture of Confucian, Buddhist and Taoist traditions. And life virtually all my peers at the time, my initial response to the Christian religion was sceptical and reactionary.

This has a lot to do with our historical background. This was before the independence of Malaya which later became part of Malaysia. The British were still our colonial masters, and the books I read were predominantly Chinese, including history. I said to myself then, “After reading the history of China, including Hong Kong, since the time of the Opium War (1839-42), please don’t tell me more about Christianity, the religion of the white, imperial and colonial masters”. The Opium War, as we all know, was fought between China and Britain and was concluded with the signing of the “Treaty of Nanking”, resulting, among other things, in the ceding of Hong Kong to Britain. This famous or rather notorious “unequal” treaty brought great humiliation to China and its people.

This is one of the main reasons why the Sino-British negotiations on the transfer of Hong Kong back to the sovereignty of China have been so difficult, complicated and controversial. They have a lot to do with past history, humiliation, national pride and prejudice. Moreover, for better or for worse, Western Christian missions were also, rightly or wrongly, directly or indirectly, involved or implicated in the whole event. Following the Treaty of Nanking, some major trading ports along the coast of China were opened to foreign powers. This also provided easy entry for Western Christian missions into mainland China as well as certain privileges for them both on the mainland and the Hong Kong island.

I was only 13 year old village boy when I first reacted against the Lutheran mission. You can see how deep-seated was the pride and prejudice that an ordinary Chinese had against the Christian religion and its missionary activities in mainland China, Hong Kong as well as other parts of Asia.

In light of this historical context isn’t amazing and incredible that such a prejudiced little young fellow like me would some 40 years later, be standing here in this former British colony to give the keynote address to an international gathering of Lutheran leaders, some of whom are actually representatives of those Lutheran churches who first sent their missionaries to Western Malaysia, including my own humble village, some 40 year ago?

I would like to take this wonderful opportunity to express my most profound gratitude to those of you who represent those churches in Hong Kong, America, Germany and Scandinavia... “

LWF Consultation on Churches in Mission

1998

As a follow-up to the 1997 Hong Kong Assembly resolution, this consultation on Churches in Mission was sponsored by the DMD in line with its mandate “To carry out programs with LWF member churches in respect to their task of mission and evangelism within the many contexts in which the churches are present” (DMD Terms of Reference). About 80 representatives of LWF member churches, mission societies or departments and related agencies came together to reflect upon and discuss missiological issues and missional practices under the theme “Into the Third Millennium: Together in God’s Mission” from 25-29 October in Nairobi, Kenya.

The aim of the consultation was to spearhead discussions on relevant missiological issues and practices, serving as a springboard for different follow-up programs. The primary intention was to promote a participatory engagement in the process of rethinking and reformulating the mission task of the church, cognizant of the fact that the center of gravity of Christianity has now moved to the South.

Participants experienced the enriching gift of diversity, as they became aware that there were different understandings, perceptions and practices of mission among the churches worldwide. While realizing the complexity of and difficulties with relationships involved in mission partnerships, be they bilateral, interregional or multilateral, they also underlined the necessity for and the blessings of cooperation in collaborating in God’s mission. The participants also felt that renewed and emerging models of missional practices were indicative of vibrant churches as they endeavored to transform challenging world situations into opportunities for rethinking and reformulating the mission task of the church. Among many other crucial issues, the consultation emphasized the importance of a holistic understanding of mission and its transformational and dialogical character.

For Luther and the other Reformation theologians, the church is more than an institution in the world in time and space. This necessitates the visible expression of the church through the community (congregation) both for confession and the practice of faith (mission). The essence of gathering around the Word and sacraments goes beyond what is performed in the sanctuary. These two essential ministries of the church are not an end in themselves, but a means to an end, which is God’s mission. Gathering and dispersion (dismissal) belong together as far as mission is concerned. What the congregation does when it gathers in the sanctuary is a means toward what it does in the world when it is outside the sanctuary. Arguably, Luther did not often refer explicitly to mission. Nevertheless, his theology of love compellingly explicates the indispensability of Christian mission that seems to have radically shaped his view of the church. The church becomes a place where Christians are given a chance to exercise God-like love—the love of the cross.

(from *Mission in Context*, 2004)

1998

Message from the LWF Consultation on Churches in Mission October 25-29, 1998, Nairobi, Kenya

Dear sisters and brothers in Christ,

Grace to you and peace in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, from the participants in the Lutheran World Federation Global Consultation on the Churches in Mission. In our gathering in Nairobi, Kenya (Africa) under the theme **“Into the Third Millennium: Together in God’s Mission”**, we have experienced the surprise and joy of a renewed call to partnership in God’s mission. We have been encouraged and strengthened for mission, by the sharing of experiences, prayer, conversation and the diversity of gifts which God has given. Our time in worship community has uplifted us with a mission spirituality. We now desire to share the gifts and insights of this gathered community with you, so that we may be strengthened for God’s mission together.

The LWF Ninth Assembly in Hong Kong in 1997 emphasized mission and called on the member churches “to strengthen our missiological and missionary efforts, to deepen our understanding of the gospel, and to explore new ways of sharing God’s love with people who do not yet or no longer know Christ as their Lord and Saviour”. (Hong Kong Report, page 53). This global consultation provided the first opportunity since the Assembly for LWF member churches, mission societies and related agencies to meet together and recommit ourselves to being Christ’s witnesses ...to the end of the earth (Acts 1:08). The consultation was conducted in the following three tracks: Theological Study in Mission, Partnership in Mission and New Approaches in Mission.

We affirm that the mission of God is rooted in god’s love and concern for humanity and for all creation. We live in many countries and contexts of personal, family, cultural and societal diversity. This diversity is God’s gift for which we are thankful. The gospel of Jesus Christ speaks within and from our communities. We encourage congregations to renew, train and equip each baptized Christian to be a witness to Jesus Christ and therefore a missionary empowered and guided by the Holy Spirit. As congregations we are called to be communities of witnessing, caring and healing, which are empowered by God’s Word and strengthened by the means of grace. This missionary vocation implies listening to needs, recognizing spiritual and material gifts, and responding with witness and ministry that is holistic.

Within this consultation we experienced that holistic ministry is understood and affirmed as part of the Lutheran identity within God’s mission – an expression of the Lutheran communion within God’s worldwide *communio*.

Proclamation, advocacy and service constitute this vision of holistic ministry, which continues to be enriched by voices from our diverse and particular contexts with challenges of evangelization and reconciliation, justice and diakonia. We also recognized that we need to strengthen Lutheran unity and ecumenical partnership in mission. In relation to people of diverse faiths, dialogue and cooperation are also elements of God's mission. Christ in our midst calls us to mission within our varied communities and contexts, not for the sake of the church, but for the sake of God's mission.

The churches and the communities where they serve, confront many harsh realities, burdens and obstacles in many regions of the world. Yet the church in many places is vibrant, confident and innovative. We listened and were enriched by the multiplicity of experiences and the renewed and emerging models for mission within our worldwide communion. The consultation called for continuing missiological study that affirms the gifts of churches in diverse contexts, and that broadens such studies to include emerging needs and experiences, such as globalization, urbanization, violence and poverty. Missiology studies should include and further explore concepts such as *mission dei*, transformation and diakonia.

The consultation also affirmed the significant role of the Lutheran World Federation in continuing to develop models and expressions of multilateral partnerships in mission. As a worldwide Lutheran communion, there is an emerging need for coordination and facilitation of expanding networks of bilateral relationships. Within the context of our Lutheran communion, there is need for embodiment of principles and practices of holistic mission within our partnership relationships. Structures, mutual accountability and transparency, planning, decision making and the sharing of resources – human material and financial – must all become part of the renewal of inclusive relationships for partnership together in God's mission.

In this conclusion we recognize the urgent need for the Gospel in today's world, and we recommit ourselves to the prophetic task which is part of our participation in God's mission. Especially within the community of the church, we are called to self-reflection and recommitment to God's mission, so that together we may become transforming communities of God's people. This affirmation echoes the commitments of the Hong Kong Assembly, that within the unity of the worldwide Lutheran communion we have an ecumenical commitment that seeks the renewed vitality of faithful partnership in God's mission into the third millennium.



May 7-12, 1998,
Montreux, Switzerland:
Project Committee
members and staff
of the Department
as well as Ms Agneta
Ucko, Deputy General
Secretary (9th person
from the right).

Findings and Recommendations of the Consultation

Recommendations on Theology, Globalization/Contextualization, Communion and service

That the DMD:

1. Plan and facilitate processes leading to a revision of the LWF Document *Together in God's Mission* (November 1988) taking into account relevant missiological and methodological issues recommended by this consultation;
2. Develop a companion document to assist churches in strengthening mission at the congregational level, aiming to be inspirational and motivating, and using simple language.

In cooperation with other relevant departments:

Facilitate processes for further study of the concepts of *Missio Dei* in view of the reality of religious plurality, transformation as a mission imperative, contextual theology, including the dialectical tension between the catholicity of the gospel and the validation of people's emergent theologies and the relation between doctrine and experience, and the meaning and implications of post-modernity and post-Christendom for mission;

3. Assist churches in discussing issues related to mission as service (diakonia) including the relevance and usefulness of the term "development" in relation to mission, the ecclesiological dimensions of service and diakonia in the LWF, and including witness through service at the congregational level;
4. Facilitate an exploration of the creative tension between proclamation (i.e. evangelistic witness) and service (diakonia) within the framework of a holistic mission, and endeavour to foster the interrelations between evangelization and development;
5. Facilitate studies and a series of consultations on globalization issues with emphasis on global challenges (e.g. poverty, violence, ecology, religions) and mission responses (e.g. justice, reconciliation, partnership, mutual respect) in order to assist and equip member churches to address the dimensions and implications of globalization, helping them to discern spirits and to have a pro-active role in sustaining healthy community and church life;

That the Departments for Mission and Development and Theology and Studies:

Facilitate study on ecclesiology and mission with emphasis on the understanding of koinonia (communion) and mission, the ecumenical dimension of missiological study and practice, including the relationships between “establishing and maintaining Lutheran identity” and “seeking to cooperate ecumenically” in mission endeavours;

6. Continue to explore the theological significance and experience of dialogue with people of diverse faiths as an appropriate and new approach to mission.

Recommendations on partnerships in mission

That the Lutheran World Federation:

1. Assist mission partners in clarifying and developing expectations and standards for transparency in mission partner relationships, involving both donors and recipients; that the diversity of cultural values, meanings and practices be considered;
Facilitate discussion and study of the effects and implications of reduced funding on mission partner relationships, and address the matter of stewardship of resources, including financial sustainability and support for mission.

That the Department for Mission and Development:

2. Assist mission partners (churches, mission societies and related agencies) in addressing issues of dependency and paternalism, by strengthening training programs for local persons for the sustainability of the mission task; that such assistance and training focus on mutuality and interdependence which is called forth within “the Body of Christ”.

That the Department for Mission and Development:

3. Assist mission partners in exploring the full range of expectations and experiences associated with the role of “international missionaries” and “expatriate missionaries”, and that statements of common understandings and expectations for the role and function of such missionaries be developed;
Facilitate discussion and study to assist mission partners in facing new contexts for mission when partners may have different perspectives on issues (e.g. poverty, gender, advocacy, sexuality) and that assistance be provided to deal constructively with controversy within mission relationships;
4. Facilitate consultation and study regarding issues of competition and cooperation relating to various mission groups or partners (ecumenical, interfaith and secular) especially in areas of service and development: Develop programs of LWF regional expression to assist mission partners in addressing mission opportunities, and encourage and assist mission partners to utilize more effectively regional expressions of the Lutheran communion for joint mission activities.

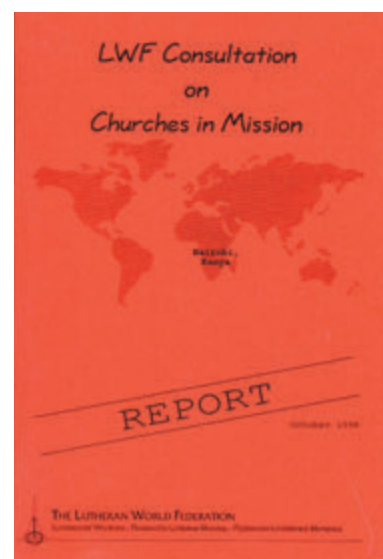
Recommendations on approaches to mission

That the Department for Mission and Development

1. Review and expand its "Questionnaire on Mission" to request information about domestic mission activities in order for all LWF member churches to participate in the survey; and publish a summary and analysis of survey responses;
2. Organise a consultation on the renewal movements in North and South within the LWF member churches, taking into account the need to share experiences of the charismatic movement, the awakening movement, and phenomena such as mega-churches;
3. Take a more active role in facilitating dialogue and sharing of mission experiences within the LWF communion of churches; consult with member churches to identify new challenges and opportunities for mission, especially related to unreached areas and communities, and that new methods of mission consider the use of television, radio, the Internet and emerging communication technologies;
4. Encourage and equip member churches for the practice of a holistic approach to mission in which emphasis is given to healing and caring ministry as a transforming response to the spiritual, physical and material needs of the community and assist member churches as they develop motivation strategies for mission, based upon a holistic approach;
5. Assist the European member churches in addressing the mission challenges in Europe;
6. Continue to develop and prioritize specific programs on mission in urban and industrialized environments.



Rev. Dr Peri
Rasolondraibe,
director,
Department for
Mission and
Development,
01.05.1995 to
30.04.2005.



Tenth LWF Assembly in Winnipeg, Canada

2003

I AM NOT ASHAMED OF THE GOSPEL

From the seven-year Report *From Hong Kong to Winnipeg* 1997-2003, pages 73-95 report that DMD accompanied LWF member churches in their effort to participate in God's mission in the world. The department also attempted to change the understanding and practice of mission, noting that: there had been a paradigm shift from the view of mission as "mission of the church" to mission of God—being called and sent by God to participate in God's mission in the world. DMD programs and projects during that time aimed to build capacity and competence, deepen and broaden understanding of mission, and provide financial, material and human resources. Responding to the commitment of the Ninth Assembly to "strengthen our missiological and missionary efforts," DMD continued efforts to deepen and expand missiological studies and reflection. The challenges of the 21st century (e.g., cyberspace, the "virtual church," globalization) call for creative thinking and new partnerships.

At its meeting in 1999, the Council discussed the findings and recommendations of the consultation and forwarded them to member churches for further study. It also asked the general secretary to facilitate implementation of the recommendations. From 1999 to 2003, various mission consultations, workshops and seminars were held as follow-up to the recommendations of the Nairobi mission consultation. In October 1999, DMD sponsored a strategic planning workshop in Addis Ababa on urban ministries. The workshop attested to a real need for the LWF and its member churches to find a new paradigm for holistic urban ministries. Urban mission contexts across all continents share several common features, such as migration, unemployment, poverty, violence and increased cultural and religious diversity, the workshop concluded. The 40 participants from 27 countries shared experiences and working models that have proved beneficial in urban settings. Strategic planning for the year 2000 and beyond was developed in small groups for the seven LWF regions.

The Nairobi mission consultation recommended that DMD "facilitate discussion and study to assist mission partners in facing new contexts for mission". In response, mission consultations were held in Asia, North America, Latin America and Europe. A consultation was held in October 2000 in Bangkok for mission partners in the Mekong region. It had three objectives: to share information about mission activities among partners, to look critically at the mission challenges and opportunities in the region by learning more about each country, and to plan for joint mission ventures. A continuation committee was established to follow up on recommendations and assess the possibility of establishing an ecumenical mission research center to accompany mission work in the Mekong area. Such a center was deemed necessary, given the cultural and religious background of the region. A second consultation was held in June 2002. A mission seminar for member churches in Asia took place in October 2000 in Kota Kinabalu under the theme "Mission in the Asian Context for the Third Millennium." The seminar expanded on the findings of the Nairobi mission consultation and identified instances of shifts in people's understanding and practice of mission. It called on churches to engage in transformation as a mission imperative, to deepen their commitment to a communion in mission, and to broaden their understanding and practice of diakonia to meet the needs of mission in their diverse contexts.

2003

A regional consultation held in November 2000 in Winnipeg, Canada, began a conversation about Lutheran communion and mission in North America. The consultation identified trust and relationships as the fundamental issues facing churches and congregations in their mission efforts. In October 2001, DMD sponsored a mission consultation in Bogotá, Colombia, on the theme “That they may have life in abundance.” The consultation discussed the findings of the Nairobi mission consultation and reflected on issues pertinent to the region, such as violence, emerging groups, ecumenical dialogue, diakonia and spirituality. It reaffirmed the holistic approach to mission and identified migration and migrant communities as a major challenge for the holistic mission of the churches in Latin America.

“Being a Communion in Mission” was the theme of the mission consultation for member churches in Europe held in November 2002 in Riga. The theme was discussed in relation to the church as a community, to society at large and to the ecumenical community of churches. Asian Lutheran churches have identified mission outreach as a high priority activity. At the Asia Church Leadership Conference in 1999 in India, the Gurukul Lutheran Theological College in Chennai and the Sabah Theological Seminary in Kota Kinabalu were selected as pioneering centers for mission training in Asia. The program plan and curriculum for the training were developed during the mission seminar held in October 2000 in Kota Kinabalu. Programs took place in 2001 and 2002. The training courses were continued until 2005 to cover all 46 member churches in Asia. The objectives of the program were to deepen and strengthen the understanding and practice of mission in Asian Lutheran member churches and to assist them and their theological seminaries in developing regional centers for mission training. The program is for clergy and laity, men and women, enabling them to identify and take up the mission challenges of the churches in their contexts. This residential training is accompanied by a practical outreach program.

A further recommendation of the Nairobi mission consultation was the review of the LWF mission document “Together in God’s Mission: An LWF Contribution to the Understanding of Mission” (November 1988). This formal document attempted to respond to the challenges presented by the tremendous global changes and reflect on the new understanding and practice of mission.

Its purpose was to:

- Help deepen the awareness of Lutheran churches of God’s mission and the role of the church as the body of Christ;
- Serve as a resource for Lutheran churches in their self-analysis and reaffirmation of mission;
- Increase cooperation within the Lutheran communion and promote joint ventures with other churches for the sake of a united witness;
- Further clarify the meaning of mission and dialogue and their relationship.

Following the Council decision to review “Together in God’s Mission”, the LWF general secretary established an ad hoc team in 2000 to undertake the revision. The team organized an encounter in Berlin in April 2001, where discussions focused on the content of the document: the contexts, theology and practice of mission. A draft of the revised document was shared with LWF member churches, theological institutions, related agencies and mission organizations. An advanced draft was shared with participants at the regional Pre-Assembly consultations and was then discussed at an open hearing and in the Village Group on the Mission of the Church in Multi-faith Contexts at the Tenth Assembly in Winnipeg. The final draft was submitted to the Council in 2004 for approval.

Tenth LWF Assembly in Winnipeg: Statements on mission

(Source: pages 54-56 of the Official Assembly Winnipeg Report)

The mission of the Church in Multi Faith Contexts: “God’s mission is wider than the bounds of the church. The church participates in God’s mission through witness in word and deed to the coming of God’s reign in diverse, multifaith contexts. Our participation in the mission of the Triune God involves three interrelated dimensions, *diakonia*, proclamation and dialogue, which are integral parts of the mission of the church. Mission as transformation challenges churches to be themselves transformed in order to become God’s instruments of transformation in multifaith contexts; the faith we confess is by nature dialogical. With the Curitiba Assembly, we: “...commend dialogue as a legitimate form of ministry and witness in a religiously diverse world... .” “...by listening to the faith and convictions of others, we have the opportunity to deepen our own commitments and to define our identity in relation to others and not over against them.”⁴ With the world mission conferences in San Antonio (USA) and Salvador (Brazil), we affirm that “we cannot point to any other way of salvation than Jesus Christ; at the same time we cannot set limits to the saving power of God.”

In light of this, we must continue to

- affirm religious freedom
- explore with people of other faiths ways in which we may undertake common endeavours which promote justice, peace and the integrity of creation
- study our Christian faith in depth and others’ faiths sympathetically, in order to better understand the relationships between them and the challenges that interfaith dialogue poses to Christian, specifically Lutheran, theology
- accelerate our efforts to equip people for witness and dialogue through education, encounters, one-on-one relationships and the contributions of persons who have crossed religious or cultural boundaries, and
- hold before our Christian brothers and sisters the interrelationship of witness and dialogue as integral to Christian mission and self-understanding. In our world today, where too often religions are used by political forces to divide people and fuel conflict, it is crucial that we pursue justice and reconciliation with those of other faiths. Reconciliation is central in the gospel we proclaim: In Christ, God has reconciled the whole creation. In this sense, dialogue that furthers such reconciliation is one of the important ways of carrying out God’s mission. Christians are called to live in peace with all and to promote reconciliation with people of different faiths, without surrendering their call to be witnesses for Christ. The relation between interfaith dialogue and proclamation requires ongoing study and discussion in our churches.

Therefore, we commit ourselves and call on member churches to

- **Listen**
- ensure that Christians from minority contexts are heard so that

- Christians in majority contexts might learn from them
- create forums where churches can openly present their predicaments and needs, and thus inspire and invigorate us to advocate for each other
- listen to people of other faiths with a willingness to learn and recognize signs of God's presence among them.
- **Repent**
 - of the church's failure to see the good gifts of God in cultures
 - of how the church has supported oppression and exploitation of people and seek to rectify these injustices
 - of how churches and individuals have exploited creation.
- **Pray**
 - for God's mission in the world, the mission of our own church, and for openness to the gospel
 - call upon the Holy Spirit to renew individuals and congregations for the sake of mission.
- **Learn**
 - promote catechesis and biblical learning in our churches; we need to know our own Christian tradition well in order to enter into responsible dialogue with others
 - read the Bible in ways that enable us to discover how God meets people in different cultural contexts
 - explore in new and creative ways what it means to be church in multifaith/multicultural contexts with regard to the nature of the church, structures, theology and theological education, spirituality, ministry and the priesthood of all believers
 - encourage ongoing renewal of our worship practices in ways that are culturally and contextually appropriate
 - prepare pastoral guidelines for multifaith gatherings and the effects of interfaith marriages.
- **Witness**
 - empower God's people for witness to the gospel in word and deed in daily life and society
 - develop and disseminate practical ways of holding together interfaith dialogue and witness
 - invite others to faith in Jesus Christ.
- **Dialogue**
 - actively pursue the dialogue of living and growing together in mutual respect and understanding, striving with people of other faiths for the healing of the world ("diapraxis") through reconciliation, peace, justice and better living conditions for all God's children.

Council meeting in Geneva, 1-7 September

2004

The theological understanding and conviction that the mission of the church, derived from its participation in God's mission, is a holistic mission, were developed further at the Eighth and Ninth LWF Assemblies in Curitiba (1990) and Hong Kong (1997). This understanding was also strongly emphasized by the Tenth Assembly in Winnipeg (2003) as stated in its message: "Our participation in the mission of the Triune God involves the three interrelated dimensions, diakonia, proclamation and dialogue, which are integral parts of the mission of the Church". This document sought to discuss and deepen the LWF member churches' understanding and practices of holistic mission that is, transforming, reconciling and empowering mission.

The LWF Consultation on Churches in Mission, held in Nairobi in 1998, underlined this holistic understanding and practice of mission as part of the Lutheran identity. The Consultation also echoed the affirmation of the 1988 LWF mission document, when it stated: "Mission encompasses proclamation, service and advocacy for justice. Mission as proclamation is an attempt for every Christian to tell and interpret the gospel story in his/her context as a way to discover God's saving action and meaningful presence in the world. Mission as service highlights the diaconal dimension of a faith active in love, working for the empowerment and liberation of those in need. Mission as advocacy for justice denotes the church's praxis in the public arena as affirmation and reaffirmation of the dignity of human life, both as individual and as community, as well as a widened sense of justice, encompassing the economic, social and ecological spheres." (Report p. 20) The 2004 Council meeting voted "to receive the LWF Mission Document with the provision that the responses and additional input received from the Program Committee be incorporated wherever possible and to request the Program committee for Mission and Development to go over the changes and provide editorial approval prior to the publication of the document."

The purpose of this document was to:

- help Lutheran churches throughout the world become more deeply aware of God's mission to the world and the role of the church as the body of Christ as a part of that mission;
- serve as a tool to accompany Lutheran churches in their self-analysis and reaffirmation of mission in their respective contexts. This means inviting the church at all levels (congregational, national, regional) and related agencies to re-evaluate their responsibility for mission and to stimulate them in their efforts to seek new ways of understanding their present and future participation in God's mission.



2010 Eleventh LWF Assembly in Stuttgart, Germany

From the LWF seven-year report *From Winnipeg to Stuttgart*, Priority No 1 of the LWF is: Strengthen Lutheran Identity as a Communion of Churches in Mission (p. 9-15)

Since its 1990 Eighth Assembly in Curitiba, the LWF has understood itself as a communion of churches. Incorporating this core identity of the federation as a strategic priority calls for ongoing reflection and sharing among the member churches. The dialogue and discernment inherent in this identity enable the LWF to gain clarity on what this communion is called to be and do.

Understanding and Practice of Mission

The church's fundamental task is to participate in God's mission to all creation. After the 2003 Winnipeg Assembly, the LWF continued to support its member churches to realize this obligation in several processes that include joint reflection, consultations and development of relevant resources, mainly through the work of the DMD and Theology and Studies (DTS). The document *Mission in Context: Transformation, Reconciliation, Empowerment – an LWF Contribution to the Understanding and Practice of Mission*, published in 2004, serves as a tool for member churches to understand and reaffirm their mission. It incorporates a strong emphasis on the paradigm of accompaniment (based on the story of Emmaus, Luke 24) to underline a holistic understanding of mission that includes proclamation, diakonia and advocacy. The publication's translation into other languages beyond the official four LWF languages and the production of complementary resource materials helped to promote reflection on this core subject.

Diakonia Belongs to the Core of the Church

In church tradition, the word diakonia describes the church's specific work toward the world. As a core component of the gospel, a defining character of the church and thus of the LWF, diakonia is not an option but an essential part of discipleship. Through its activities in the fields of development cooperation, humanitarian relief and advocacy, the LWF continually seeks to live out its diaconal calling. Since the 1980s, a process of rediscovering the concept of diakonia has been emerging within the ecumenical movement. Churches in the global South had pointed to the potential of this concept to express concern for a more holistic approach to church-based development work. In the communion, this reflection has increased since the Winnipeg Assembly. In order to bring together the key elements of the theological understanding of diakonia, DMD coordinated a consultative process with member



Rev. Dr Kjell
Nordstokke, director,
Department for Mission
and Development,
01.04.2005 to
31.07.2009.



churches, aimed at creating a common platform for the Lutheran communion in its understanding and practice of diakonia. The results have been compiled in the *LWF Handbook on Diakonia*, published in 2009, to serve as a theological education resource and training manual for diaconal workers. A complementary publication, *Serving the Whole Person: The Practice and Understanding of Diakonia within the Lutheran Communion* (LWF Documentation 54/2009) brings together a variety of regional perspectives on this topic. As a result of this process, LWF member churches have continued to affirm diakonia as central to what it means to be church. However, some questions have been raised suggesting further work is required. These include: What is the relationship between congregations' spontaneous diaconal action and the interventions of organized diakonia? How does our understanding of holistic ministry affect diaconal action? How can capacities for diaconal work be developed? This reflection must continue.

For the first time since its beginning, at Stuttgart there was no formal resolution or action on mission. However, when LWF General Secretary-elect Rev. Martin Junge delivered his address to the 2010 Stuttgart Assembly, he said:

From the brief explanation of my faith journey you will probably recognize that I understand the mission of the church holistically. I believe that proclamation, diakonia and prophetic presence in society (advocacy) belong intrinsically together. They all influence each other in a process of mutual transformation. There needs to be coherence between the three dimensions of holistic mission. And there needs to be sound balance between them as well. To get at this coherence and to find this balance, I believe, is going to be a task for the LWF in the years to come. Therein, the understanding of the evangelizing church needs to be addressed as well.

From 2010, the Department for Mission and Development experienced changes in leadership, accompanied with declining funds for its work. The following directors served during the period 2010 to 2016:



Rev. Dr Musa Filibus, 01.09.2010 to 31.07.2013.



Rev. Dr Carlos Bock, 01.09.2013 to 31.01.2015.



Rev. Sylvio Schneider, 15.01.2015 to 30.11.2015.



Rev. Dr Fidon Mwonbeki, from 01.01. 2016 onwards.

2016 LWF Consultation on Contemporary Mission in Global Christianity

The **LWF Consultation on Contemporary Mission in Global Christianity** took place from 16 to 19 November 2016 at the Ecumenical Centre in Geneva, Switzerland under the theme: **“I am not ashamed of the gospel....”**

LWF member churches and mission agencies from all over the world actively participated in the workshops and plenary sessions of this consultation, and the keynote address was delivered by Rev. Dr Rafael Malpica-Padilla, executive director of the ELCA's Division for Global Mission.

The consultation's aim was to contribute to shaping and inspiring the future of mission work within the LWF communion in the following ways: Exploring the current mission contexts in different regions through the exchange of experiences, stories and good practices;

- Enabling exchange between mission practitioners in different regions in order to improve cooperation and for the sake of mission and unity;
- Contemplation of key challenges for mission work in different regions;
- Enabling interaction and exchange among practitioners from different global contexts and exploring possibilities of networking for future cooperation.

Keynote speaker Rev. Dr Rafael Malpica, director Global Mission, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America: “I would like to invite us, and through us the upcoming LWF Assembly, to rethink the church from the perspective of mission. Yes, I deeply believe that missiology defines ecclesiology. Mission flows from the being of God. Simply stated God wills for the world that which God is, and for that purpose God has called a people to serve as instruments of God's mission in the world. Then, how should we think the church, structure the church, prepare leaders for its ministries, and resource the church so that at the end of times she will found favour in God's eyes for her faithfulness.”

The following recommendations were produced in order to be presented at the 2017 LWF Twelfth Assembly in Windhoek, Namibia:



Rev. Leila Ortiz from the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, celebrating the Eucharist during the Opening worship.

Statement on Mission to the Twelveth Assembly of the Lutheran World Federation

The LWF has always seen mission as at the core of its identity and mandate since the gospel is the power of God for salvation to all (Rom.1:16).

The LWF reaffirms its understanding of participating in God's mission holistically as encompassing proclamation, diakonia (which includes development) and advocacy.

We acknowledge a great treasure of decisions, resolutions and resources and recommendations by different LWF governing bodies concerning mission. These are still relevant today even though in many contexts they have not been fully realized. We encourage all member churches to make good use of the resources available and accessible at LWF Communion office.

We also acknowledge the rapidly changing global and local contexts and their impact on doing mission. As we commemorate 500 years of Reformation we are aware of the fact that all churches are facing opportunities and challenges of different kinds in relation to, e.g.

- Lutheran identity and theological formation
- charismatic movement and Lutheran churches
- secularism and declining churches
- religious pluralism and fundamentalism
- polarization and division in society
- proclamation and discipleship
- advocacy, diakonia, (and development) in the present context
- migration (e.g. immigration, emigration, integration, displacement, refugees)
- youth in mission
- women and men in mission
- prosperity gospel and theology of glory
- communication as strategy and as a means

As churches in ongoing reformation we call on each member church of the LWF to rethink its being church in its context and its role in God's mission. LWF is asked to provide accompaniment in this process, e.g. modeling, analyzing contexts, encouraging, enabling exchanges, etc. Each church has responsibility to equip each of its members to fulfill the expectation of the Lord: "Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect"(1 Pet 3:16).

We understand the mission of God as relational. We call on LWF to continue and intensify its responsibility to convene, coordinate and enable mission cooperation and mutual accompaniment between different member churches, including their related agencies engaged in holistic mission.



Rev. Dr Fidon R. Mwombeki, director, Department for Mission and Development explaining from the LWF History book: *"From Federation to Communion"* 31.01.2015.



Rev. Dr Rafael Malpica, director, Global Mission, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, keynote speaker.

In closing remarks to the LWF Consultation on Contemporary Mission in Global Christianity, by Rev. Dr Fidon R. Mwombeki, Director, DMD

"I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation for all who have faith..." said:

We deliberately chose this verse to guide our consultation. It is one of the main inspiration verses to Martin Luther, as he was struggling to find and experience God's righteousness. This is one of the verses which have inspired so many after him, to carry through their part in the *Missio Dei*. And it is my conviction that this verse should still inspire us afresh, in the world where bearing witness to one's faith is something which is not at all easy or feasible, if it has ever been.

The gist of its inspiration lies in the source of it of this power. It is the power of God. It is not ours. It is for that reason that even after several years of testimony by some missionaries in some areas without anyone accepting the gospel, they never felt ashamed of what they were doing. They knew, their task is to bear witness to the gospel, but they have no influence on the effect it has on the people. We cannot convert anyone. We cannot instil faith even in our own children. We cannot save anyone. It is God's business. Our task is only to bear witness to it.

Even when we may feel that some regions are more challenged than others in this task, it is apparent that in fact, all churches need to listen to the teaching of from 1 Peter 3:..."Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect." All of us need to have this in our minds. But in order to be able to do that, people must have knowledge about this hope! Is it time to go to the basics, using whatever means are available to us, to make sure individuals from family level are again in the knowledge of what they believe in. Without it, it will be difficult to give an answer, if we do not have it.

We have met here for these two days of intensive work. We have reminded each other where we are coming from and what main issues we are facing in our different contexts. We are conscious of our confession as Lutheran believers. We

are here because we have been actively taking part in the work of mission in our different contexts and assignments. I am so glad that we decided not to focus on the academics of mission, inviting theoreticians to tell us the right words of orthodoxy. We have gathered as people in the field of mission, actually doing it in our different functions. We are engaged at congregational, educational, synod/ diocese or national levels...

1. Let us not be ashamed of the gospel. It is power of God for salvation.
2. Let us be ready to help and accompany each other, with our different gifts and needs
3. I have discovered how effective the LWF may continue to play its role which it has played from the beginning—that of convening. There is so much going on in our individual fields. We meet in different situations and contexts and countries, but many times we are not adequately informed about who is doing what. Looking back to even before 1947, the LWF was expected to play this role. We want to find new ways and means of convening and strategizing together and even building slowly our joint opinions.
4. I am so delighted that being from so many different organizations with slight or major strategic or even doctrinal disagreements, we should be able to work together. Working together brings us closer. And LWF is willing to undertake this task.
5. We have developed new ideas, revisited old ones, and looked into the future together. We want to travel further together. We shall be shaping the results of this consultation to make them useful to our work, particularly in our Department for Mission and Development, but the whole communion as well.
6. I want to thank you once again for enabling the event to take place by your great financial contribution, knowing it was in none of your budgets. That you could adjust your budgets and be here, and some of you enable your partners to be here, is for me the most significant signal of the trust you have in the LWF and our role to convene such events. In the future, we shall be more programmatic and we shall let you know in the future.
7. I want to thank once again the general Secretary of LWF for his eagerness to have the issue of mission also included in the Assembly. And I believe this consultation has contributed significantly to that debate and I am sure what you have done here will help us as we move ahead in planning our work in the LWF communion.



Rev. Dr Martin Junge, LWF General Secretary with some of the more than 100 participants of the consultation.

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I AM NOT ASHAMED OF THE GOSPEL

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